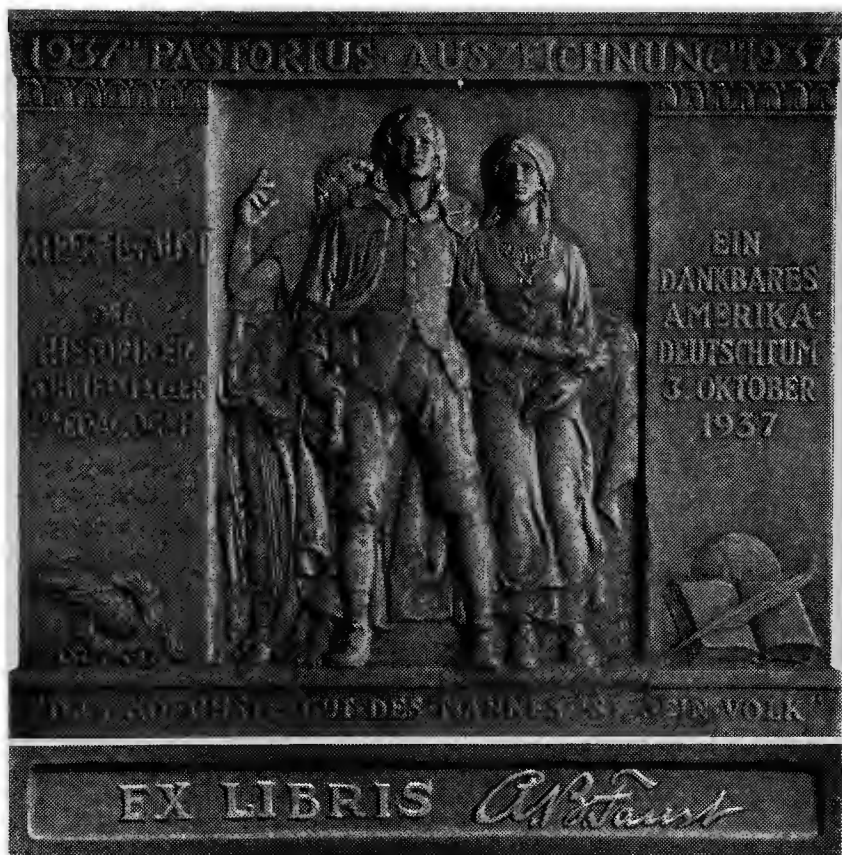


# DOUBT

*and Other Things*

ELIHU VEDDER

PC  
3543  
E21  
D7  
1922  
+



CORNELL UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY



For Albert Bernhard Faust  
with admiration  
and homage.  
Orin Sargent

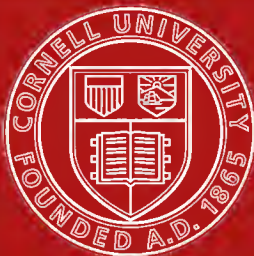
February 1944.

*This book was digitized by Microsoft Corporation in cooperation with Cornell University Libraries, 2007.*

*You may use and print this copy in limited quantity for your personal purposes, but may not distribute or provide access to it (or modified or partial versions of it) for revenue-generating or other commercial purposes.*

DATE DUE

[illegible]



Cornell University  
Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.

<http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924021714203>

*Digitized by Microsoft®*

**DOUBT**  
**AND OTHER THINGS**



THE SOUL BETWEEN FAITH AND DOUBT



# DOUBT AND OTHER THINGS

VERSE AND ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY

Elihu Vedder



CAPRI-ROMA

BOSTON  
PORTER SARGENT  
MDCCLXXII

PS  
3543  
E21 D7  
1922 +

*Copyright, 1922, by*  
PORTER SARGENT

A-877167

THE FOUR SEAS PRESS  
BOSTON, MASS., U.S.A.

THIS BOOK  
I DEDICATE TO MY DAUGHTER  
ANITA HERRIMAN VEDDER  
WHO HAS SAVED IT FROM DESTRUCTION  
AND TO THOSE WHO MAY BE GLAD  
SHE HAS DONE SO  
ELIHU VEDDER



## Foreword

**E**LIHU VEDDER, at the age of eighty-six, now, after ten years of continuous thought and revision, consents to have these verses printed. Eight years ago, some of his friends will remember, their publication was first announced. At that time, he wrote, "Of course all things are crude and must ripen before fit for the public stomach. Yet I will send them along." Since then they have not been hermetically sealed, but have been ageing in the wood.

"The 'Doubt'," he writes "is doubtful—a fragmentary thing at best." And again, "I am sorry there is so little hope in 'Doubt'. It is as if written by a poet on Mars in prospect of its inevitable end. According to the astronomers, we have little reason for crowing. Perhaps other worlds are being fitted up for us."

"Doubt and Other Things," his friends will agree, however, is the ripest product of the genius of this gorgeous reincarnation of Leonardo.

Vedder, in his genius, is of all time, perennial and without age. His robust vigor, time-defying, impresses alike his friends and his portrait painters.

Of the latter, he says, "I send Paxton's portrait,—good as a Franz Hals. If you use it, have Paxton's name come out clearly. He was too modest by half in signing." Of another portrait he writes, "It's good, but as it gives not only the front face but the two sides, it is too broad—a sort of Mercator's projection, as it were—too many cocktails in evidence."

His active mind spirals about one's own, but always comes back and squarely hits the mark. He signs his name with a vigorous hand, and then looks up, eyes apop, and exclaims, "Behold the trembling hand of age!"

But this vigorous old oak that his friends have so long known now begins to show signs of physical decay. We can only pray

that he may yet have time, as he has the will, to complete some of the many projects that still remain in hand. For his spirit rebels at the weakness of the flesh.

Still "fondly round his heart are curled the clinging tendrils of this dear old world," and defiant of the processes of time, he writes, "A man once told me he began near St. Peter's, then moved to the Repetta, then to the Tritone—always getting nearer the cemetery of San Lorenzo. I, on the contrary, began my Roman life in this very house, circled about Rome, and now find myself just where I started so many years ago."

Since Vedder first saw Rome in 1857, his visits to these United States have been few and infrequent. For more than three score years he has dwelt apart, in Rome and Capri. Living in retirement, shunning publicity, Vedder has been really known only to those friends who, by persistence or propinquity, have penetrated the first bulwarks of reserve with which he has isolated himself. Once the first barrier was broken, he has given of himself and of his personality without stint.

Detached from the trivialities of modern life, he is, from his aerie, keenly observant of them. Unaffected by the petty eddies that swirl contemporary literary and artistic life, he boldly breasts the strong main currents. He has consorted with Michael Angelo, Leonardo, Durer, and the great of earth, and interprets life as would they today.

But his vision of the world is his own, and those who know him and his work catch wonderful glimpses, not only through his painting and his less known sculpture, but of late through his verse.

Whatever he does, in paint, or clay, or words, is always expressive of vision. To one who remarked that "an artist should be just an artist up to his eyes," Vedder retorted, "Yes, but look at Durer and Da Vinci. Didn't they cram ideas into their work? Have any of the big fellows ever been 'just artists up to their eyes'? By Jove, you can make up your mind that any chap who boasts of being 'an artist up to his eyes' is a fool the rest of the way!"

PORTER SARGENT

*October 1, 1922*

# Contents

## DOUBT

DOUBT	21
THE BIGOT	26
SAINTS	29
BUGABOOS	35
MADNESS	37

## VERSES ALLIED TO DOUBT

PROEM	53
WHY	54
IN EXTREMIS	55
TRUTH	56
THE OLD QUESTION	57
THE EVER-OPEN DOOR	58
LOGIC	60
DEATH	61
THE ENDLESS FIGHT	62
DOUBT	63
THE DEVIOUS TRACK	64
THE EARLY BIRD	65
ANNO DOMINI 1914	67
MORALIZING	69
THE ECLIPSE	70
A TEXT	72
THE MISSIONARY	74
THE DOGMATIST	75
TRUTH	76
RECONCILERS	77
INCONCLUSIVE	78
RESPONSIBILITY	79
THE SUNDAY DRAM	80
THE UNFORESEEN	81
A QUESTION	82
THE ANTIDOTE	83

THE ENEMY SOWING TARES . . . . .	84
THE PREDICAMENT . . . . .	86
GOLD . . . . .	88
FEAR . . . . .	89
ATOMIC RESPONSIBILITY . . . . .	90
FAITH . . . . .	91
EYESIGHT . . . . .	92
"USELESS ARE DENUNCIATIONS" . . . . .	92
MAN'S NEED . . . . .	93
"GAZING AS WE NOW DO ON THE SKIES" . . . . .	94
HOPE . . . . .	96

## THE OTHER THINGS

FOREWORD . . . . .	99
EVIDENTLY UNDER INFLUENCE . . . . .	100
SOME JOKES . . . . .	101
OPTICS . . . . .	102
ADAM . . . . .	104
EQUALITY . . . . .	105
THE TEMPLE DOOR . . . . .	106
ABSURD . . . . .	107
A SONG . . . . .	108
MARSYAS . . . . .	109
POETRY . . . . .	110
RHYME . . . . .	111
NINETEEN FIFTEEN . . . . .	112
THE SYMBOL . . . . .	113
"LEAVE THE CYPRESS AND THE YEW, TREES SO TRUE" . . . . .	114
"LET FAIR TOMBS STAND THE BUSY HIGHWAY NEAR" . . . . .	115
THE LETTER I . . . . .	116
THE SONNET . . . . .	117
A SIGH . . . . .	118
THE WEEPING WILLOW . . . . .	119
TO A YOUTH . . . . .	120
A DINNER DECLINED . . . . .	121
VERDUN . . . . .	122
UP TO DATE . . . . .	123



PACKED DOWN	124
QUOTATIONS	125
THE HERMIT	126
LUNA	127
M.D.'s AND D.D.'s	128
TO WILLIAM GRAHAM	129
PARODY	130
THE VICTORS	131
REVERY	132
THE LAND OF SONG	133
WHY EXPLAIN?	134
A FEARFUL THOUGHT	135
ALFARU	136
SPELLING	137
TO AN OLD MAN	138
BITTER-SWEET	139
HERMITS	140
CLASSIFICATION	142
TECHNIQUE	143
THE THREE KNIGHTS	144
A REFRAIN	145
A BIRTHDAY GIFT	146
AGED SEVENTY-FOUR	146
A PRECEPT	147
HEREDITY	148
THE PRODIGAL	149
FAME	150
SUPERSTITION	151
IN OLD BOOKS	152
THE BOOKWORM	153
BOOKS	154
DREAMS	156
THE BEARD	157
THE EAGLE	158
HIS VOCATION	159
SMITHEREENS	160
TWO FAIR PHILOSOPHIES	161
THE BENDED BOW	162

WORDS . . . . .	163
THE ABSENT CURE . . . . .	164
INTENSITY . . . . .	165
SONGS OF INDIGESTION . . . . .	166
THE NUDE . . . . .	167
TWO PICTURES OF SNOW . . . . .	168
MOTHER SHIPTON . . . . .	169
FOLLY ENTHRONED . . . . .	170
A PROTEST . . . . .	172
BEER AND BELLY . . . . .	173
JOHN BEATS THOMAS . . . . .	174
QUAINT QUESTIONS . . . . .	175
THE PRAYING MANTIS . . . . .	176
NAUGHTY SPIRITS . . . . .	177
THE LOVESICK FAUN . . . . .	178
THE DREAMING MOUNTAIN . . . . .	180
PRIDE . . . . .	180
MIRTH'S MUSIC . . . . .	182
TO HOLLAND . . . . .	183
IN CAPRI . . . . .	184
GOOD ADVICE . . . . .	185
OPTIMIST AND PESSIMIST . . . . .	186
VENUS . . . . .	187
SMALLER BY DEGREES AND BEAUTIFULLY LESS . . . . .	188
BUBBLES AND BAUBLES . . . . .	189
THE OUTLINE . . . . .	190
MIRACLES . . . . .	191
THE ADVENT OF MAN . . . . .	192
THE PESSIMISTIC MAZE . . . . .	194
THE SLOT . . . . .	195
THE BOOMERANG . . . . .	196
CULTURE . . . . .	197
TOO TRUE . . . . .	198
HELL . . . . .	199
THE HOW AND WHY . . . . .	200
PHILOSOPHERS . . . . .	201
DON'T CALL ME MISTER; CALL ME GEORGE . . . . .	202
ILLUSIONS . . . . .	203

A CHINESE PICTURE . . . . .	204
COMPENSATIONS . . . . .	206
HUMBUG . . . . .	207
CAMERA LUCIDA AND CAMERA OBSCURA . . . . .	208
AUTUMN . . . . .	209
A CURE FOR INSOMNIA . . . . .	210
THE CLASSIC . . . . .	211
FOURTH OF JULY, 1914 . . . . .	212
FAME . . . . .	213
RHYME AND REASON . . . . .	214
AN EXCUSE . . . . .	215
THOSE DAYS . . . . .	216
COULD I BUT KNOW! . . . . .	216
AN OLD MAN'S SONG . . . . .	218
A QUESTIONING SAGE . . . . .	220
"THE SEVEN SAGES ALL AGREED" . . . . .	221
AUNT EVELINE . . . . .	222
FATHER WILLIAM . . . . .	223
A NEW YEAR'S GREETING . . . . .	224
IN FAR-OFF ZANADU . . . . .	225
HERFORD'S FLY . . . . .	226
MICROBES . . . . .	227
A TIMELY SAINT . . . . .	228
THE MERMAID INN . . . . .	229
THE BREATH OF SPRING . . . . .	230
ENCHANTMENT . . . . .	230
THREE OLD MEN . . . . .	232
VANITY . . . . .	234
"HIGHFALUTIN" . . . . .	235
PEN PLAY, OR PIFFLE . . . . .	236

## GLEAMS

FOREWORD TO GLEAMS . . . . .	243
THE ARCHÆOLOGISTS . . . . .	244
WHY COMPARE? . . . . .	246
D. G. ROSSETTI . . . . .	247
WHITMAN . . . . .	248
EMERSON . . . . .	249

ARISTOTLE	250
BURNS	251
PLUTO AND PLUTARCH	252
ERICSON	254
RUSKIN	255
HUDIBRAS	256
LACON AND FESTUS	257
COLERIDGE	258
POE	260
THE BACON THEORY	261
PEPYS	262
DANTE	263
SPENCER'S SUPINE COMEDY	264
DIOGENES	265
OMAR'S GARDEN	266
TUPPER	267
CRICHTON	268
HORACE WALPOLE	269
CHATTERTON	270
BROWNING	271
CARLYLE	272
GOETHE, OR PSYCHIC CONCHOLOGY	273
WILLIAM BLAKE	274
BOSWELL AND JOHNSON	275
DEFOE	276
GUSTAVE DORÉ	277
TOLSTOY	278
CERVANTES	279
CORNARO	280
BEETHOVEN	281
MOORE	282
HERFORD	283
AUSTIN DOBSON	284
BOTTICELLI	285
CARLO DOLCE	286
BANGS	287
A COMMENT	288
BOOKS AND LOOKS	289

# Illustrations

THE SOUL BETWEEN FAITH AND DOUBT	<i>Frontispiece</i>
"CAN WE LIVING EVER SOLVE? AFTER—IS IT THEN TOO LATE?"	22
THE BIRTH OF THE IDEA	33
THE RESURRECTION DAY	47
A MYSTERY IN LINES AND SPACES	52
THE EVER-OPEN DOOR	59
THE ECLIPSE OF THE SUN BY THE MOON	71
THE ENEMY SOWING TARES	85
THE DEEP-THINKING—THE ENDURER	95
"LEAVE THE CYPRESS AND THE YEW"	114
"LET FAIR TOMBS STAND THE BUSY HIGHWAY NEAR"	115
LUNA	127
"WHO FLED THE WORLD THEIR SOULS TO SAVE"	141
BOOKS	155
FOLLY ENTHRONED	171
THE DREAMING MOUNTAIN	181
THE ADVENT OF MAN	193
A CHINESE PICTURE	205
THOSE DAYS	217
ENCHANTMENT	231
POST-FUTURIST ARCHÆOLOGY, A.D. 3000	245
IN PLUTO'S REALM	253



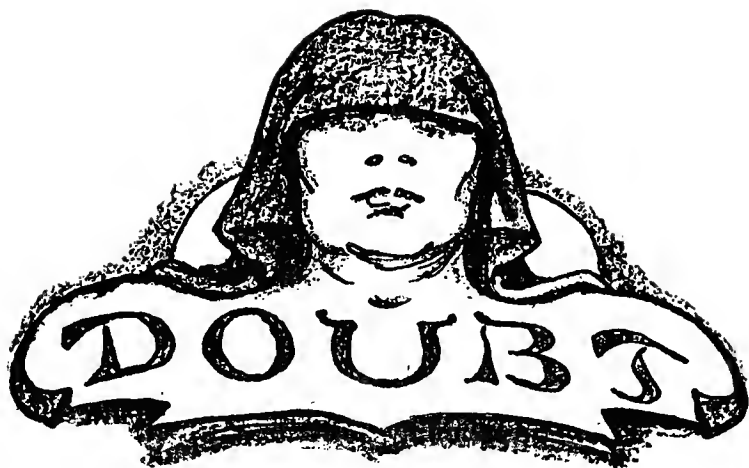
**DOUBT**  
**AND OTHER THINGS**

### **'NOTA BENE'**

**I***T is not for me to pass judgment on Doubt or Doubters, that concerns Philosophers and Theologians; but as a painter I can at least give its portrait with some hope of success, after an intimacy of many years standing. Doubtless Erasmus Roterdamus could have done better, as shown in his "Praise of Folly" where he attends to Fools. But Doubters are not Fools; among them may be found many eminent persons, even a Saint—who by rights should be their patron—St. Thomas.*

*As to the utility of this portrait of Doubt I must quote the magazines: "It will serve to identify me."*





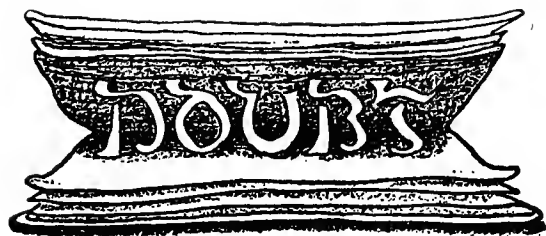
Those who can read the hearts of men  
May know what motive moves this pen,  
But he who holds the pen scarce knows  
From what dim source that motive flows.  
He sees in Nature's endless strife  
By gleams, the mystic wheel of Life;  
Again a ray as from above  
Shows him the flaming heart of Love,  
Then in the evergrowing gloom  
A single star above a tomb.

A Gleam, a Ray, a Star, a Tomb,  
A Guess, a Faith, a Hope, a Doom.





CAN WE LIVING EVER SOLVE? AFTER—IS IT THEN TOO LATE?



Man makes himself a Labyrinth,  
Which he then calls the life of man,  
And in its mixed, meandering ways  
He doubting and believing strays  
Most of his days.

When he is right he fears he's wrong,  
And when he's wrong—he thinks he's right;  
He lights a candle—calls it day,  
He blows it out and calls it night,  
And thinks he's right.

Once Zion's altars streamed with blood  
Of victims slain his soul to save,  
He doubted—now the olive grows  
Where he was once but Faith's blind slave  
Or blind Faith's slave.

That is, the olive ought to grow  
Where Turk to Christian still can show  
The very birth-place and the grave  
Of him who came mankind to save,  
Lost Man to save.

Now in a Babel of wild creeds  
The theologic maggot breeds  
Where Man no more the offering slays  
But curses his brother as he prays,  
And even slays.

By doubting that the world was flat  
He proved, it seems, the world is round,  
By doubting that the world stood still  
He proved that theory unsound—  
It does go round.

And now perceiving all things move  
He longs to know who gave the shove,  
Came it in hatred or in love?  
Had he a hand in this great shove?  
Who gave the shove?

He sees all things forever move,  
Conditions change, with changing days,  
He hopes all things will end in Love,  
Yet wonders at Love's cruel ways—  
A Love that slays.

Time was when men the Doubter killed,  
In this they proved themselves unwise,  
Their aim should be to kill the Doubt,  
This they can do when they find out  
That Truth kills Doubt.

Abused Doubt—that Finder-out,  
That Stripper-off of all disguise,  
That Purger of Man's muddy eyes,  
The thing that Bigots most despise,  
How hard it dies.

But wait a bit—Doubt does not die;  
It is essential as the eye,  
For 'tis the prism of the mind  
Making a spectrum where we find  
The lines of Truth better defined,  
To which we're blind.

One while, a taper's feeble ray  
Lit the dark catacombs of Care,  
Now, candles numberless display  
A blinding light resembling day—  
In which we pray;

To some all temples cast a gloom:  
They seem a candle-lighted Tomb  
Where Truth lies dead; they need a ray  
Of purer light, to light the way—  
Out into day.





Priests sometimes prate of Liberty.  
Beware—'tis for themselves, not Thee.  
Look at the lands where they most rule  
Then meekly yield to them the school,  
And you will very quickly see  
What use they make of Liberty.

They'll give the youthful mind a twist  
That in the adult will persist,  
Making of man a pliant tool  
To aid their plan—which is to rule.  
They're simply wild to rule the roast  
And when they can—again will toast,  
See History.



The Mind's a stuff that doth retain  
A form, an impress, or a stain  
That nothing can obliterate;  
A hall-mark on Youth's golden state  
That must remain.

[26]

When Theologians fall out  
And tousel sheaves of Truth about,  
They sometimes grains of Wisdom find  
But ever leave one grain behind—  
That grain is Doubt.

To offset which they possess Hope,  
Or they think so, with which to cope  
With Nature's great brutality,  
A Hope which is a varying faith  
In Immortality.

Pure Justice such as men conceive,  
Or God permits them to believe,  
In Nature they nowhere perceive;  
This, Nature seems to be without,  
And so they doubt.

But 'tis considered a great sin  
To doubt the faith you're brought up in;  
Yet all reformers must begin  
By committing this great sin—  
If 'tis a sin?

Savonarola saw expire  
And in humiliation dire  
Beheld his faith melt quite away  
Before another Bigot's fire  
On one dread day.

Yet many thousands Death have sought  
Beneath the car of Juggernaut.  
And so we see a varying Faith  
Which makes us pause to estimate  
The worth of Faith.  
[27]

That Faith's the strongest thing on earth  
It would be foolishness to doubt.  
The only thing is to find out  
Which Faith no other Faith can doubt—  
Just find that out.

And what are we to say of Hope?  
Cannot that Mighty Spirit cope  
With Doubt and Fear and deep Despair?  
And clear this labyrinthine air  
Of dark Despair.

---

The world outside Man's little maze  
As wide as all creation is,  
Yet he pursues his narrow ways  
And separates God's ways from his—  
God's plan from his.

God's plan and his may be the same,  
They may be doing all they can,  
Man helping God—God helping Man,  
This seems to be the latest plan,  
The final plan.

So after this naught need be said.  
Beyond this we no further go,  
It may be, or may not be so,  
As yet we do not surely know—  
Some say they know!







I have a bone to pick with Saints,  
Be they the fat or skinny kind,  
Who first their way to Heaven find  
And leave the most of us behind—  
  'Tis most unkind.

They take the reason by surprise  
With half-seen truths backed up by lies,  
So mingled and so well entrenched  
Are all these venerable lies  
  That Doubt now tries.

Take then that scientific side  
Where by degrees you gently glide  
From facts to unproved theories,  
Where one wanders more at ease  
  The less one sees.  
  [29]

That things are as they are, we see;  
The reason why is not so clear,  
Nor is it comforting to know  
That they are so because they are so—  
That does not cheer.

What is the use of seeming odd?  
Claiming your mind cannot grasp God?  
When any preacher in the land  
Will glibly make you understand  
All about God.

I often think 'tis strange to see  
How every man unwittingly,  
No matter how opposed his plan,  
Must do some good to every man;  
'Tis a good plan.

So should the spirit of Tom Payne  
Or Voltaire, visit earth again,  
That visit some would call a good,  
Or might, or could, or would, or should—  
I know I should.

The same abuses are as rife  
As when they lived this earthly life,  
The need of caustic wit and pen  
Is felt as keenly now as then—  
Both wit and pen.

Of course I often mention Plan  
Because it rhymes so well with Man,  
I make them rhyme, but not agree,  
And it's just that that bothers me—  
They won't agree.



The fact is no one knows the Truth;  
Goodness is lovely, Sin uncouth—  
Yet see them sitting cheek by jowl,  
Sanctity and Sin most foul,  
Yes, cheek by jowl.

Contrasts are needed, the Wise say,  
Night, to bring out the light of Day;  
Even poor starving Poverty  
Gives birth to generous Charity,  
So the Wise say.

All have a life—some more, some less;  
Some live to curse, some live to bless,  
Some lives are full of happiness  
While some are but a sorry mess  
Of wretchedness.

Yet earth is fair with what has been,  
With what now is, with what's to come,  
With beauty every day renewed,  
With pleasure yet to be pursued,  
                    With hopes new won.

Yes, beautiful beneath the sky,  
Its verdant plains, its mountains high,  
Ah! Yes, its beauty none deny,  
But there's the shadow—all must die,  
                    Yes, all must die.



But set aside sad thoughts of Death,  
See the myriad stars at night,  
Is there not Hope, is there not Might  
In all that most stupendous sight?  
                    And great delight?



THE BIRTH OF THE IDEA

There carping Doubt fades quite away,  
Man feels that all things must be right,  
That there at least his soul is free  
To wander through Infinity  
By its own might.

Wandering through Infinity,  
What doth Man's ardent spirit find?  
Naught but the limits of his mind—  
The confines of his little mind  
Doth he there find.

Yet beareth he a germ divine:  
'This universe may yet be mine.'  
Poor fool, he dreameth drunk with wine,  
Yet his bold dream hath something fine—  
Almost divine.

Such 'wine' old Omar dreamed about  
As he went reeling in and out  
Through taverns theological,  
All ending in a Persian bout—  
More logical.

Old Omar lived so long ago  
He could not know what we now know.  
Nor solve as we the scheme divine,  
And so he solved his doubts in wine—  
In real red wine.



## Bugaboos

Men filled the world with Bugaboos  
Until at last they now refuse  
To fear or trust in Bugaboos.  
Now millions of Atoms fill all space  
Till waves of aether these replace,  
Which some consider merely thought.  
So matter is reduced to naught;  
No matter, they'll begin again  
Reducing thought to ease or pain  
Or piously to Good and Evil,  
Thus saving that Bugaboo  
THE DEVIL.



All that we know of Deviltry  
Was equally well known of yore;  
So we but tread an ancient shore  
Where all the pebbles we behold  
Have been gone o'er.

Things we thought dead or stowed away—  
The curtained corner, turned down light,  
Now boldly flout the face of day,  
Resuming in fair Science' name  
Their ancient sway.

Science enamored is of Light,  
For wandering in the darkest night  
Tracing the ultra-violet ray  
She only hopes to prove some day,  
There is no night;

But, says the ruthless modern mind,  
'What makes all things so devilish?  
Tell us the Truth; no more, no less;  
We're always put off with a guess,  
Always a guess.'

The more we ponder on the question,  
The more we need a good digestion;  
Some swallow all and let it stay,  
That was the good old-fashioned way,  
That pious way!

'Let good digestion wait on all'  
Remains, we fear, a pious wish  
In view of this enormous dish.  
What makes all things so devilish?  
Yes, devilish.

[36]





## Madness

Saints taking things so seriously  
Bring on the very Hell they dread,  
For every mad-house shows some one  
Who saved his soul, but lost his head.

Nor is it safe to stop half way  
For Dante shows as clear as day  
That 'tis the hesitating Souls  
That in the end, the dearest pay.

(March 2, 1915.)

We fear good folks must shut their eyes,  
Or never read or realize,  
How much the Saints all have to tell  
And how on it they love to dwell—  
We speak of Hell.

In these days it's kept out of sight,  
For fear it might annoy or fright,  
'Tis so depressing in the night,  
In fact it's out of fashion quite—  
But is this right?

It was prepared with so much care  
In hopes of sending thousands there.  
Truly, 'twould make old Dante stare  
To find his Hell now almost bare—  
So few go there.

But do not let us overween,  
What has been may again be seen;  
Names change, but things remain the same;  
So we may see his Hell again—  
With all its pain.

Saints many different stories tell,  
But all agree upon a Hell,  
There all their varied stories blend,  
Their sinners all to Hell they send—  
Admire the 'Blend.'



## A Plan

Someone devised a simple plan  
Imagining a God-like man,  
Who without church or without creed,  
Helps each according to his need.  
Not in Man's plentitude of power,  
In health, in wealth, in happiness,  
But in his dark despairing hour  
Of weakness and distress.



This the predicament we're in—  
Without Sin there is no strife,  
And without strife there is no life.



From this conclusion to escape we try in vain,  
Nature a singularly even balance doth maintain,  
For the same nerves that give us pleasure  
Give us pain.





Good men are born the wide world o'er,  
And have been since the days of Noah,  
'Tis not their creed that makes them good,  
'Tis in the breed or in the blood,  
Not neighborhood.

Creeds are but guesses Saints have made  
At mysteries beyond their reach,  
Which they, before they've fairly grasped,  
Begin to teach.

They've fed men on fair fallacies,  
Hope's rainbow hues and dazzling dyes,  
But never show the naked Truth's  
Crude nudities.

Perhaps 'twould like Medusa's head  
Turn them to stone or strike them dead,  
So must be overlaid with lies—  
To spare their eyes.

[41]

Those strictly following the track  
Of others, find when they get back  
They have no progress really made,  
It has been shadow following shade  
Quite retrograde.

Better o'erleap the hedging walls  
Unmindful of your many falls,  
See for yourself what can be seen,  
Allowing none to stand between,  
Or the Truth screen.

---

'Truth—What is Truth?'—I hear the reader cry,  
Truth changes from day to day—and so do I,  
We're ever on the wing, could we but stay  
I might find out what Truth is some fine day.





Is a fearful affair  
When the doubter  
Finds out, that he  
Is beginning to —  
Doubt his own Doubt.

Doubt implies not Unbelief  
But rather seeks for that relief  
Which only certainty can give,  
Otherwise we're like the brutes  
Who only live.

Doubt often sees that Policy  
Parades at times as Honesty,  
But never will consent to be  
Honest—through mere Policy,  
That pious plea.

Doubt helps select, helps to appoint,  
Even elect but not anoint,  
Doubt ever lacks creative will:  
The Doubter rests the Doubter still,  
And ever will.

How cunningly the Doubter rails  
And tears to bits the pious tales  
Of Saints and Prophets, yet he fails  
To give us better pious tales,  
Or fairy tales.

Doubt, like the Earth-disintegrating worm,  
Is not the working of a will infirm,  
But is the slow preparatory toil  
That makes Man's mind a more propitious soil.

Doubt doubts not for the sake of doubt,  
It only seeks the Humbug out,  
Unmasks pretentious dangerous fools,  
Or the ambitious, or their tools—  
As bad as fools.

[44]



Doubt finds no fault with efforts made  
To remedy Life's many wrongs,  
It only thinks with all earth's woes  
There should be fewer Victor's songs,  
Triumphant songs.

The triumph still is with the Strong,  
Or cunning Greed still leads the way.  
Doubt only asks of those who pray  
Or preach, or teach, or talk so much,  
Why this delay?

Brute Force gives but one knock-out blow,  
And all your fine-spun theories go.  
Think you by tying threads again  
You may that Gulliver retain,  
Bind or restrain?

---

Truly we need another life  
To heal the Victims of this strife,  
They ask no crowns for victories won  
But compensation for wrongs done  
Under the sun.





Where lies the Truth?—You must find out  
Or blindly cast aside all Doubt;  
But know that where there's mystery  
Its shadow Doubt you'll surely see.  
A better standpoint than that show  
Of knowing what you do not know,  
That shallow show.



The Doubter is not made but born,  
So he doubts much if Gabriel's horn  
Will wake him on that last great morn—  
Doubting the morn.



Digitized by Microsoft®  
THE RESURRECTION DAY

He thinks each morn may be his last,  
And that without the rousing blast  
Of Gabriel's awakening horn,  
Doubting the horn.

He ought to fear that Gabriel  
Might mean for him a call to Hell,  
And would if he did not doubt Hell  
And Gabriel.

---

Some think the Resurrection Day  
Is one wild scene of dire dismay.  
No—'tis as silent as the tomb.  
Enough the looks all bent on Thee  
To seal thy Doom.

When in Truth's mirror Thou shalt look  
And see thine eyes gaze back at Thee,  
Will that not be thy Judgement Day?  
What need of other eyes to see?  
What canst Thou say?



Man's heart first beats; he then takes breath;  
His heart beats on until his death.  
But he's not asked if he thinks meet  
That he should breathe, or his heart beat—  
Nor about Death.

[48]

Not being consulted in the least  
How doth he differ from the beast?  
Treading a path he cannot see  
How can he say: 'My soul is free.'  
How can that be?

Wills Man to live from the beginning  
And finds that living is but sinning?  
Or does he live in destined grooves  
To find by sinning he improves?  
What, Sin improve?

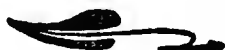
Evil is that which is opposed  
To a great Law, or settled scheme,  
The working out of which would seem  
Constitutes Life.

To peaceful Souls this makes life Hell.  
Weary of which they fain would dwell  
Without this everlasting strife,  
Unconscious both of Heaven and Hell—  
Almost of Life.  
This is Nirvana—at its best  
Profound, almost unconscious, rest.

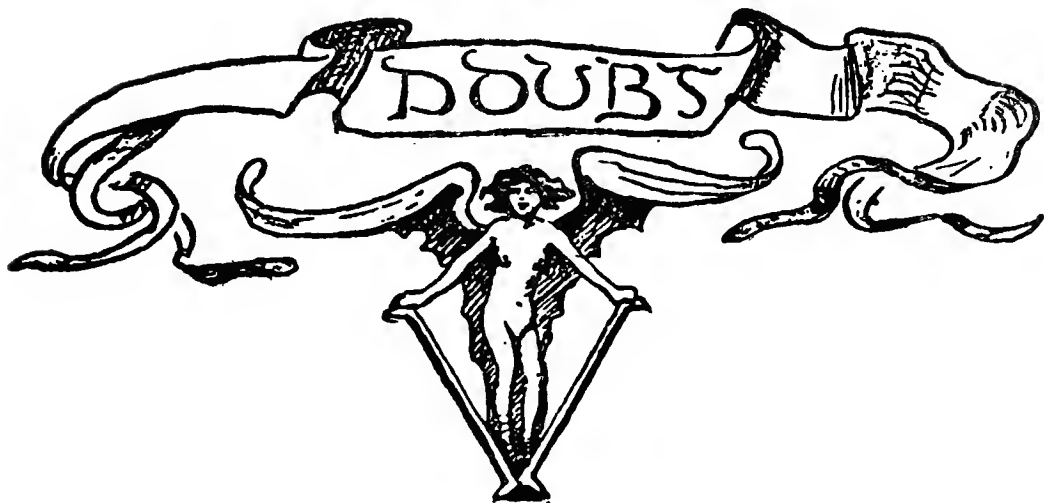
And yet, and yet, 'tis sad to doubt,  
For when we see a growing light,  
A harbinger of better days,  
Cold Doubt absorbing all its rays,  
Turns it to night.



Hope says, 'I seem to see a light.'  
Faith says, 'That is the dawn of day.'  
Doubt says, 'I'll wait, it is yet night.'  
Death says, "'Tis left for me to say  
Which one is right.'



# VERSES ALLIED TO



Thus I diverge on either hand.  
An I—divided, cannot stand,  
Falling apart it forms a V—  
Which I much fear resembles me.  
By turns attracted or put out,  
I sometimes marvel, sometimes flout.



A MYSTERY IN LINES AND SPACES



## Proem

When past and present both conspire  
To picture forth a future dire,  
This may the doubting mind relieve—  
Doubt long enough and you'll believe.  
Believe all Good is from above,  
Believe all is ordained by Love.

The voice of Doubt is never still  
While we have breath,  
Perhaps for this there was ordained  
That Rest—called Death.

## Why ?

Why in the name of common sense  
When we perforce are hurried hence  
Must we inevitably dwell  
Either in Heaven or in Hell,  
Is more than common sense can tell !

On Earth, we live in both, 'tis seen,  
Not quite in Heaven, but between  
Those others, who contented dwell  
In what to us would seem a Hell !

But after—why a scale so just  
That even one little speck of dust  
Will send a soul to Heaven or Hell,  
(Where it must permanently dwell)  
Is more than common sense can tell.





## In Extremis

Of all the fictions of the mind  
Men take to with avidity  
Is that salvation they can find,  
With lightning-like rapidity.

Can oak with centuries of growth  
Be changed to weeping-willow?  
Can Man his years of sin revoke  
At once upon Death's pillow?



## Truth

No sooner doth Man make a guess  
Than all the actors change their dress,  
Till Truth remains the best guess made,  
Pro tem, in Life's great masquerade.  
And even this may be a guess,  
Or shifty actors' change of dress.



All things men see, and ever saw,  
Seem governed by unchanging law.  
Then he is part of a machine?  
If not, 'tis clear all things but seem  
Governed by law.

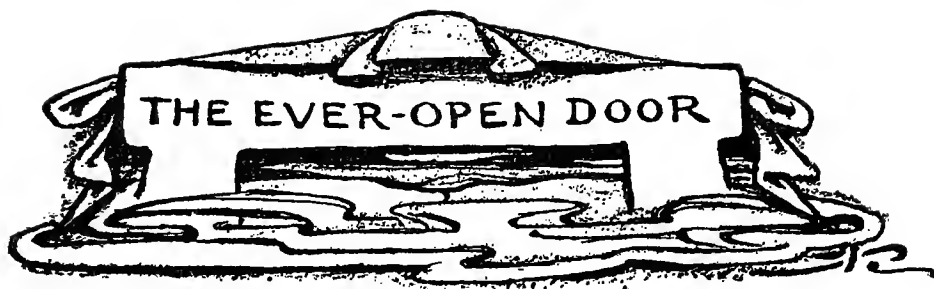
## The Old Question

The man who reconciles the two—  
Free-will, Predestination—  
By all odds will turn out, we think,  
The smartest in creation.  
Yet both are true and must be so;  
Ingenious preachers make them go.

The universe is very wide,  
In time and space well may abide  
(No need that they be side by side)  
Nirvana and frenzied energy;  
And so these two be reconciled,  
Man's vaunted Will and Destiny.

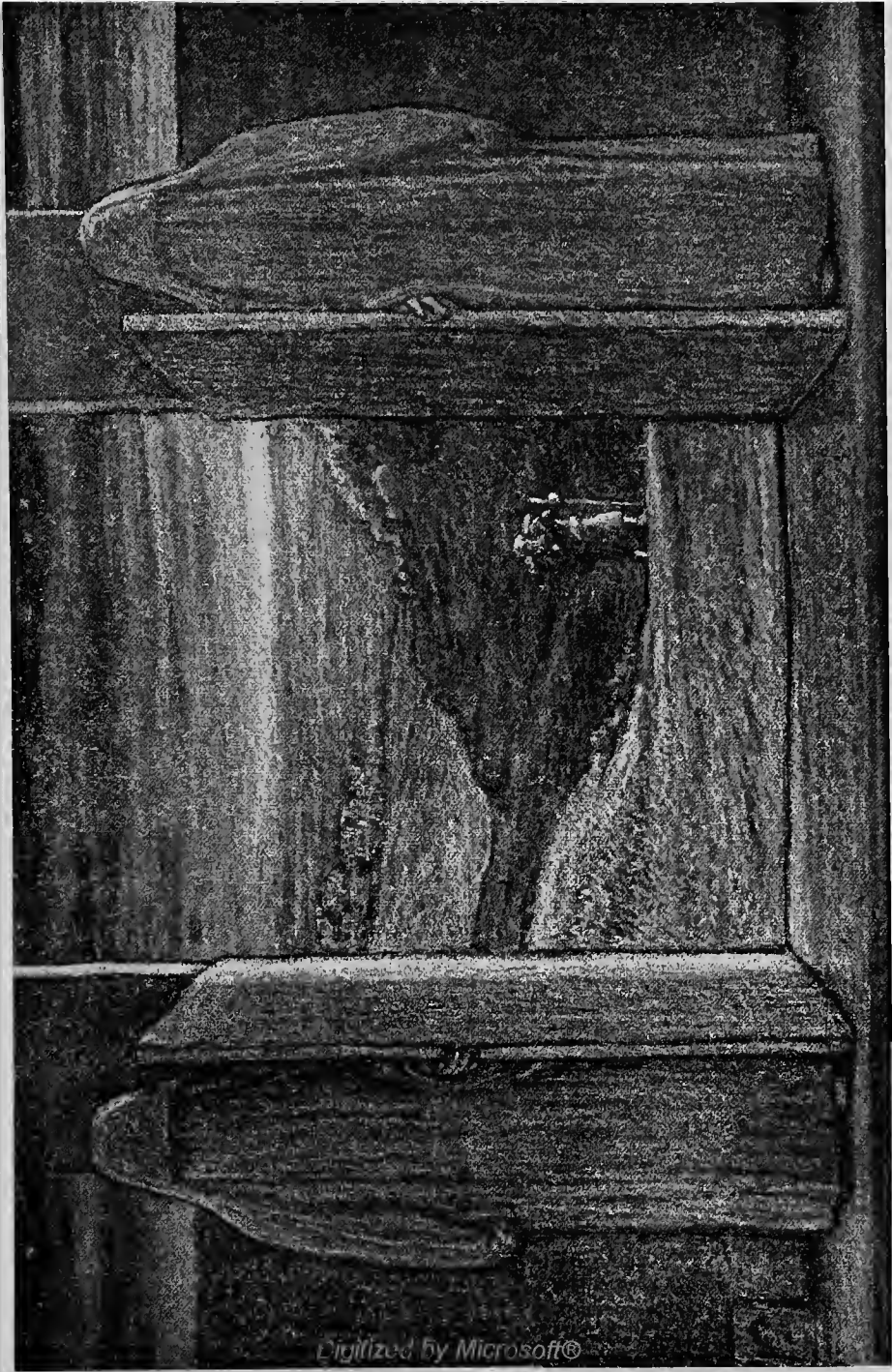
Yet spite this guess Doubt fails to see  
How Free-will can be Destiny?





What means this wide and ever open door?  
Through which mankind—the high, the low,  
The rich, the poor, forever go, to weal or woe?  
Means it Defeat—or means it Victory?  
Means it Joy—or but more Misery?  
We only know our bodies are but dust,  
And go they must, back to infinity—  
But where the Soul, and its fond hopes  
Of Immortality?





THE EVER-OPEN DOOR

# Logic

Logic affords this simple plan  
To wind up the affairs of Man.

Let God and Satan cease to fight,  
At once comes on eternal night,  
Where Life itself yields up its breath  
Lost in the great repose of Death.  
For with the torch of Life burned out  
Ended is both Faith and Doubt;  
And movement ends and all is dumb  
In silent equilibrium.  
And Logic—Devil—God and Man—  
In chaos end, where they began.

Here then behold a perfect plan  
To wind up the affairs of Man.







## Death

Death is a theme,  
Belonging to the scheme  
Of Life;  
And bids fair to be  
An unsolved mystery  
To all Eternity.  
Some moralists contend  
That Death is not the end,  
Only a change;  
If this be so, 'tis strange  
We do not crave the grave,  
But doubting go.  
Of one thing only sure:  
We hope—but do not know.

---

To Death we give the name of Change,  
'Tis simply but a change of name,  
The awful fact remains the same,  
Which, sugar-coat it as you will,  
Always remains a bitter pill.

We see in Nature periods of rest,  
And Death is one of them,—  
Perhaps the best.

[61]



## The Endless Fight

Facing, the Gladiators stand  
On the arena's well-swept sand,  
Blind Faith and a dogmatic Pope  
'Gainst Reason free and man's best hope,  
For though the Colosseum's gone  
We see the endless fight still on.





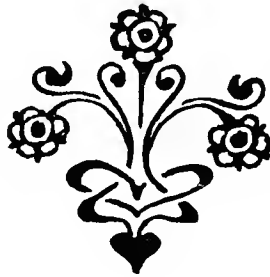
This Doubt is an Opti-pessimist,  
Who is quite willing to confess  
His is a jolly gruesomeness,  
Or a much chastened cheerfulness.

Seeing the folly of extremes,  
Hopes of the absolute, but dreams—  
Ever willing to take sides,  
He in amused perplexity abides.



## The Devious Track

When men found that their ancient Gods  
Were heroes deified,  
That God-like saints were merely men,  
That prophets sometimes lied,  
They wondered at the devious track  
They long had wandered in,  
Forever getting nearer God  
Along the paths of Sin.



Note:—I fear this last line has a strangely familiar look.



## The Early Bird

Where is the child who has not heard  
The story of the Early Bird?  
But where is taught, in school or chapel,  
The story of the Worm and Apple?

Surely we may this truth affirm:  
There always is an earlier Worm;  
So let the child lay this to heart:  
It all depends upon the start.

The Apple must have started fair  
Without defect in any part,  
Yet presently the Worm is there  
Eating at its very heart.

Did Bird and Adam eat the fruit?  
Leaving the worm a leafless brute?  
For notice, as you see him squirm,  
How naked seems the shameless Worm.

We then approve the early Bird,  
But when his song of thanks is heard  
Should it be counted as a sin  
To ask what sings the worm within?

Is a child taught in any chapel  
The story of the Worm and Apple?



## Anno Domini 1914

Some busybodies stir up things when level,  
Or pull down things they think have grown too high;  
For every Angel, promptly find a Devil  
And dig a Hell beneath the fairest sky—  
They're very spry.

But Doubt begins by doubting of the Devil  
And naturally of Angels in the sky  
Fills up the Hells till they again are level  
And proves it also can be very spry,  
How hard both try.

Yet spite of all this preaching and this pounding  
And centuries of hoarded wit and lore,  
The Angels still the praise of Peace are harping  
While from the Hells we hear the Devils roar  
The praise of War.







## Moralizing

Observe, and you will soon discern  
More are inclined to teach than learn,  
And hear the priceless gift of Speech  
Monopolized by those who Preach.

How prone men are to moralize  
On everything that meets their eyes.  
I will not quote the sparks that fly  
Upwards, but note this tendency,  
That not a stone within their reach  
But holds a sermon,—so they preach.  
They see the cats' relentless claws  
Are deftly hid in velvet paws;  
The frugal ants' great industry,  
Shiftless cicalas' minstrelsy,  
They do compare, and make us stare  
At doings in natural history.  
Like Adam, the world before them lies  
Wherein to prose and moralize.

But then so obvious grows this crop  
I scorn to reap—Shame bids me stop.

## The Eclipse

Lovers, they say, still vow and sigh  
Neath thy bright rays,  
O huntress of the sky!  
Though Science ignores Mythology  
Yet fancy sees Thee patiently  
Counting thy month-long nights and days,  
Keeping thine orbit's strict integrity.  
What hopest Thou? Some cosmic crash  
That shattering our old world to bits,  
May end thy task's monotony  
And from Earth's bondage set Thee free?





## A Text

This text that long has seemed most fit,  
We think needs brushing up a bit.

The Lord, they say, is good to all,  
He even notes the sparrow's fall.  
Does he prevent it?—not at all,  
Save in a very general way.

What is this general way about  
When sparrows from their nests fall out?  
Providing cats from day to day  
With fallen sparrows—we should say.

Were sparrows notified in time  
They would not fall—but cats can climb,  
And curtail genealogic lines  
To which the sparrow much inclines.

Compared with sparrows cats are few  
Yet for the sparrow seem to do,  
Cats would be badly off indeed  
If sparrows only took more heed.

But building nests unscientific  
Well may the sparrow prove prolific,  
Always in Nature something's to blame;  
In Human Nature 'tis the same.

Now may we ask what they are at?  
The Lord, the sparrow, and the cat?  
Or ask in a more general way  
The nature of this game they play?



## The Missionary

'Touch not the Faith thou dost not know.'  
So Shakespeare sings,—if this be so  
How dare the Missionary mild  
Wreck the faith of any child?

He can but teach what he was taught,  
Perhaps a creed with error fraught,  
Learned when a little child at home,  
Geneva's creed, or that of Rome,





In Dogmatists we never find  
Those tangled workings of the mind;  
There all is crisp and well defined.  
To such let us resign the skein.  
They'll straighten out the string again,  
Untie the knots and make all plain.

With them assertion—flat or round—  
Has ever steadfast held its ground,  
Until by sheer persistency  
A heaven-sent message all men see.  
But Doubt unconquered holding out  
From time to time will have its flout.



# Truth

See how the wily Doubter tries  
To prove the world is full of Lies,  
Ignoring the overwhelming proof  
That it is also full of Truth.

So really we need not despair.  
If things look dark, they'll soon be fair,  
Nor yet on pessimism sup  
For Truth, though slow, 'is creeping up.'





## Reconcilers

Who seeks the bible God to bind  
With nature's God, will quickly find  
The two in one cannot be bound.  
For while one seems to man most kind  
The other's careless as the wind;  
One asks for Love, the other, Fear.  
He knows not which to seek or shun,  
So tries to bind the two in one.



## Inconclusive

'I wend me forth,'—as poets say,  
(That is, I take one of my strolls)  
To where lean Saints in deserts stray  
Losing their heads to save their souls.

But well I know before I go,  
That Hermits have one single thought—  
What will become of their poor souls,  
To them all other cares are naught.

No middle course the Hermit sees,  
With him it's either fry or freeze.  
Useless are reason, useless suggestion;  
You canot spoil a saint's digestion.

So I wend back from whence I came,  
They, not much wiser; I, the same.



## Responsibility

All creeds in one thing end the same:  
God gets the glory, man the blame.  
Call this a bargain?—is it fair  
To think the Lord should have no share  
In his own work?—or at the best  
Bear half the burden, we the rest?  
Zealots say we bear it all  
And well deserve to since the Fall,  
And often bid us to admire  
The mighty hand that lit the Fire.  
Will zealots tell by whose desire  
We make the Hell and he the Fire?  
Is it, or is it not, his work?  
If partly ours we should not shirk  
To bear our share, but is it fair—  
His, all the glory—we, the shame?

---

One God will save the Sinner, if he's good,  
Another would not save him if he could,  
For he must save himself; that is the favoured plan.  
Yet being what he is, we doubt much if he can.



## The Sunday Dram

As little birds at close of day  
To various perches find their way,  
So men repair to various churches  
Seeking their theologic perches;  
The perch that bears the slim canary  
Will break beneath the cassowary.

This has led to some deep thinking  
On the vice of Sunday drinking,  
For some must have their Sunday dram  
A powerful blend of Bless and Damn,  
Which persevered in of a Sunday  
Leads to what workmen call Blue Monday.

## The Unforeseen

We often see the unforeseen  
Will wreck the cunningest machine.  
Does Nature then her own work mar  
In cooling sun or clashing star?  
Or does she see the unforeseen?  
That would be Fate—How about Man?  
Is he excluded from the plan?  
Does he not also make and mar,  
Or shares he the fate of sun and star?

## A Question

God certainly has his own way  
His lessons to impart,  
But would we treat a school-boy so  
And see him to perdition go,  
Or break his sorrowing heart,  
Because he'd disobeyed some rule,  
Perhaps on his first day at school?



## The Antidote

We cannot think 'tis Nature's plan  
To damn the greater part of man;  
Yet eminent persons give it out  
That we'll be damned if we but doubt.  
And here we will the doctors quote  
Who find in bane the antidote.

For Nature keeps a high-priced school  
In which men often play the fool.  
See with what skill her mighty hand  
Fills the fatal poison-gland,  
And paints the adder's gaudy coat  
That the incautious fool may find—  
The Antidote.



## The Enemy Sowing Tares

To Satan then we come at last,  
His brow with clouds of doubt o'er cast,  
Wandering on his self-made way,  
Who cannot rule nor yet obey.

See him sowing tares by night,  
Tares of gold with great delight,  
At the foot of that dread tree  
Wet with blood on Calvary,  
After—what harvest shall man see?







THE ENEMY SOWING TARES

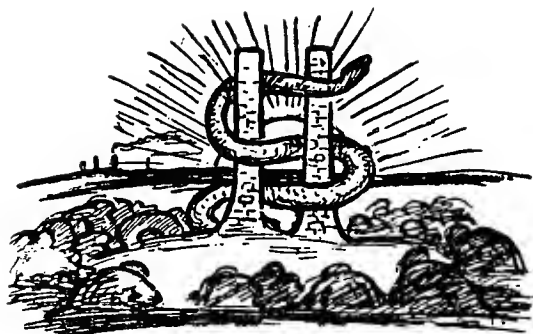
# The Predicament

Science admits, or seems to see  
That "I" persists—not so the "Me";  
That "I" lives on eternally;  
The fate of "Me"—Mortality.

For "I," the prospect is sublime.  
While "Me" seems but the sport of Time  
Or chance and shifting circumstance,  
Forever hurrying it on  
To its dark end—Oblivion.







Men worship trees and aeroliths,  
Ancestral bones and Hero-myths,  
Then shroud in symbols mysteries,  
And worship them on bended knees—  
Crescents, crosses, double-keys—  
But worship most, if truth be told,  
The Symbol of 'Almighty Gold.'



## Fear

Fear is a Fiend that wanders in  
The fairest fields of Arcady,  
Shadow of Joy that longer grows  
As the bright day sinks to its close,  
Till mingling in the shades of night  
Joy and Fear sink out of sight.



## Atomic Responsibility

Men like dazzled moths revolve  
About the light they cannot solve,  
'Tis so about this theory,  
'Atomic responsibility.'

Does each atom bear its part  
And aid great Nature's beating heart?  
Or by opposing bring about  
The fruitless anarchy of Doubt?

## Faith

Look at the humble dog's mute Faith.  
His honest face no doubt doth show,  
No warmer Faith than his can glow  
In any human heart below;  
And if his Faith is in the plan  
How then can Doubt deny it Man?

# Eyesight

Man, from his defective eyesight never free,  
Is blamed for what he sees or cannot see,  
For misfortunes he can never find a screen;  
He's blamed for what he cannot have foreseen.

Say all ends well, and I must be content;  
Say all looks well, and I must needs dissent.



Useless are denunciations,  
They but lead to reformations,  
Which in their turn must be reformed,  
The defective giving birth to  
The deformed.



## Man's Need

As when a bold ship breasts the main,  
The stronger rigging stands the strain  
When weaker ropes break free,  
So the strong trust that 'God knows best'  
Sustains the Soul when all the rest  
Is lost in Life's raging sea.

Then let Doubt do its very best,  
Doubt long enough—you'll need a rest,  
And finally agree  
The guidance of this universe,  
Thy birthplace and mysterious nurse,  
Is not a task for Thee.

Fear not a preacher in disguise,  
'Tis only one who only tries  
To show himself and Thee,  
That in this turmoil of the mind  
A God man needs, and seeks to find  
Through all Eternity.





Gazing as we now do on the skies  
With ever keener, ever stronger eyes,  
We see such signs of Wisdom and of Power,  
That a belief seems growing hour by hour.

A Vision that doth the Soul entrance  
'Tis of a Faith, not based of Ignorance:  
A Faith, which yet in time may set aside  
The dreams of Saints and philosophic pride.



THE DEEP THINKING-THE ENDURER

**This seeming endless Theme,  
This book without a scope,  
Let both end where all Doubt  
Must end, in one word—**



# THE OTHER THINGS



Lift not the Eyebrow of Surprise  
Nor deem that I too highly prize  
These little outputs of my pen,  
Wouldst have me differ from all  
Men?





## Foreword

In my Crusoe isolation  
Many things I save in verse  
Which I might in conversation  
Wise, or otherwise, disperse.

*I am absolutely ignorant of the Art of versification. I don't know the difference between an 'Anapæst' and a 'Spondee.' I cherish this ignorance (which a reference to an unabridged would dispell) for the purpose of trying what a man with some traces of literary, poetic, and critical faculties could do, were the expression of his thoughts confined to verse alone. Besides—*

Bubbles often keep afloat  
Things that otherwise would sink,  
So words by one not very wise  
May cause far wiser men to think.

In other words a house I build  
That will require much greater wit,  
In patching up, or pulling down,  
Than was employed in building it.



## Evidently Under Influence

Some aim to make the frightened reader's flesh creep  
And some to make that gentle being's eyes weep,  
But I—casting aside such worn out wiles,  
Aim only to provoke that curious creature's smiles.

Quite true it is that I ought not to roam  
In fields where others are much more at home;  
But nothing daunted I keep on my fool-track  
Where Angels (timid things) are seen to draw back.

Surely, strange influences must be at work  
Urging me on to work I ought to shirk;  
Truly miraculous must be that strange thing,  
Which makes one born poetically dumb, sing.





## Some Jokes

Some things I write not out of spite  
But merely from a sense of fun,  
And there I make a great mistake  
And wish I never had begun;  
For few there are, I've found thus far,  
Who like a joke at their expense;  
But this is wisdom that we learn  
Solely through experience.

Jokes must be heard before they're seen.  
Yet how absurd—they lurk between  
Serious lines, and then are seen,  
As one may say—before they're heard  
And only after hailed with laughter.

Time sweeps away like chaff the laugh,  
But it returns and gives again  
Its joy or its spasmodic pain;  
I mean the joke that's like a poke  
The ribs between; although not seen  
The pain is keen and leaves us sore,  
To such we never cry 'Encore!'



## Optics

Our eyes like wrinkled panes of glass  
See all things crooked as they pass,  
Reason, the Optician, tries  
To straighten our defective eyes.

I think it can be proved with ease  
That man all things through glasses sees,  
Tinged by the rainbow's varied hues  
From orange-red to purple-blues.

Old-fashioned spectacles, we find,  
Best suit the philosophic mind;  
While Sages, specks of pale sage-green  
For introspective use are seen.

Astronomers through telescopes,  
Microscopists through microscopes,  
Observe the distant and the near,  
The latter finding much that's queer.

Soldiers through red the carnage view,  
Their leaders cool through Prussian-blue;  
Yet these same leaders, when off duty,  
Warmly review the passing beauty.

See how with purple glows the glass  
As the long line of prelates pass,  
Each hopes for a more crimson glow,  
The line is long and Death seems slow.

All know how rosy is the morn  
Seen through the hunter's early horn,  
Of course I mean his early glass,—  
That's a poor joke, but let it pass.

It is the lover and his lass  
Who first see life through the same glass  
But grey-beard Time to their surprise  
Soon changes both the glass and eyes.

But chiefly the Kaleidoscope,  
Fit emblem of fallacious Hope,  
Remains the best of all man's toys,  
The first he joys in,—last enjoys.

But why should we the list extend?  
These aids to sight will never end  
Till Death, the Glazier, comes along  
Glazing our eyes and ends our song.



## Adam

Some temptations are immense;  
We cannot all say 'Get thee hence.'  
But more especially just when  
Resistance seems to common men  
Almost like flying in the face  
Of a kindly providence.  
What! left alone with but one woman,  
She so charming—he so human,  
Both without experience  
Wandering in fond dalliance  
Where the sunlight softly dapples  
The couch-like grass mid gleaming apples;  
Add to which no fear of Hell—  
Of course poor Adam promptly fell.



# Equality

Men are born equal—at least they say so,  
Then in God's name why don't they stay so?

Make men equal, if you please.  
Set a Newton shelling pease,  
Set Edison a-popping corn;  
So botch a spoon and spoil a horn.

We now say: at all expense  
Cultivate your common sense.  
Common surely it should be,  
Yet is the rarest thing we see.  
For with the cart before the horse  
Into the ditch we go, of course.





## The Temple Door

Rising from my troubled sleep,  
Weary of counting the passing hours,  
I stand and gaze on sleeping Rome  
And count her centuries of power;  
Pondering on the solemn sight  
So dim I scarcely can decide  
If Janus' ancient temple door  
Stands but ajar—or open wide;  
Or if old Mars, dread God of War,  
Beholds again with grim delight  
Rising and spreading as of yore  
The crimson desolating tide,  
Alas! I fear the temple door  
Stands not ajar—but open wide.

(February 15, 1915.)





## Absurd

Pope, Kaiser, Czar, and Emperor,  
Opposing powers—alike all pray  
To one God for the Victory.  
Each never doubting in the end  
To him God will the Victory send.  
How can they think without a shock  
That God can be a weather-cock  
And turn to each the Victory?  
Nevertheless they go on praying,  
Industriously each other slaying,  
Never doubting in the end  
God will to each the Victory send.



## A Song

I seem forever hearing  
A soul that sings alone,  
Or is it only sighing,  
It has so sad a tone?

Yet ever in the twilight,  
When sounds are hushed and low,  
It seems forever saying:  
'My song Thou soon shalt know.'

Is it a traveller weary  
Singing to cheer his way?  
His journey nearly ended  
As ended is the day?

Dear Soul, canst find no other song  
To cheer me on my way?





## Marsyas

Poor Marsyas, scorned by great Apollo  
Because the landscape did not follow  
The gentle pipings of his flute,  
Remained not mute.  
From shady dell or rocky waste  
His humble little friends all haste  
Drawn by his spell;  
To them his music seemed more real  
Than the Olympian's ideal—  
Nearer the heart.  
And so he ever pipes apart,  
Nor will he Apollo's motto take—  
'Art for Art's sake.'



# Poetry

Of all the vainest things on earth,  
The most deprived of wholesome mirth,  
It strikes me 'Poetry' is the worst,  
Yet some must write it lest they burst.

You do not say what you intend,  
You do not go straight to your end,  
But go about and spend your time  
In seeking what words best will rhyme.  
'Tis plain as on the face the nose  
That you had better write in prose.



## Rhyme

The power of Rhyme, like that of Time,  
Must cause the loftiest Bards to bow,  
And make them use time after time  
The silly rhymes I'm using now.  
So should the wind but bow a bough  
That bough for sake of rhyme must sough,  
Or should the wild wind prove unkind  
Some solitary leaf 'twill find  
And tear it from the soughing bough—  
Thus making its brief life more brief  
And like this ending a relief.



## Nineteen Fifteen

Could Science make Faith scientific,  
Thus a Religion 'a la mode,'  
We'd find that such a creed eclectic  
Would need the broadest kind of road.

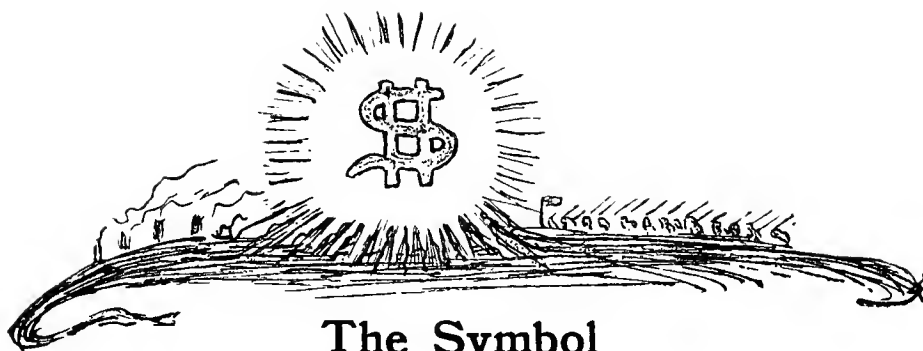
For now the ancient roads seem narrow,  
The Star of Bethlehem grown dim,  
Angelic greetings far too hopeful,  
Unverified their lovely hymn.

Instead with glad hymn megaphonic  
We greet a new electric Star,  
And as we fondly gaze upon it  
Hope we have seen the end of War.

Now 'Peace on Earth' men hear again,  
Again the nations see delighted  
That Peace, a dove—like Aeroplane—  
But fully armed—has just alighted.

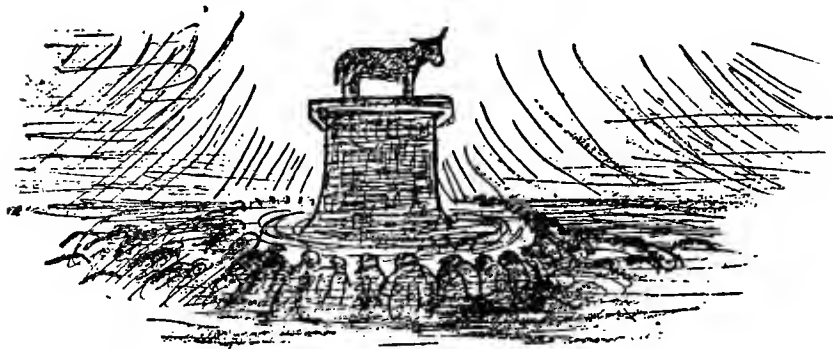


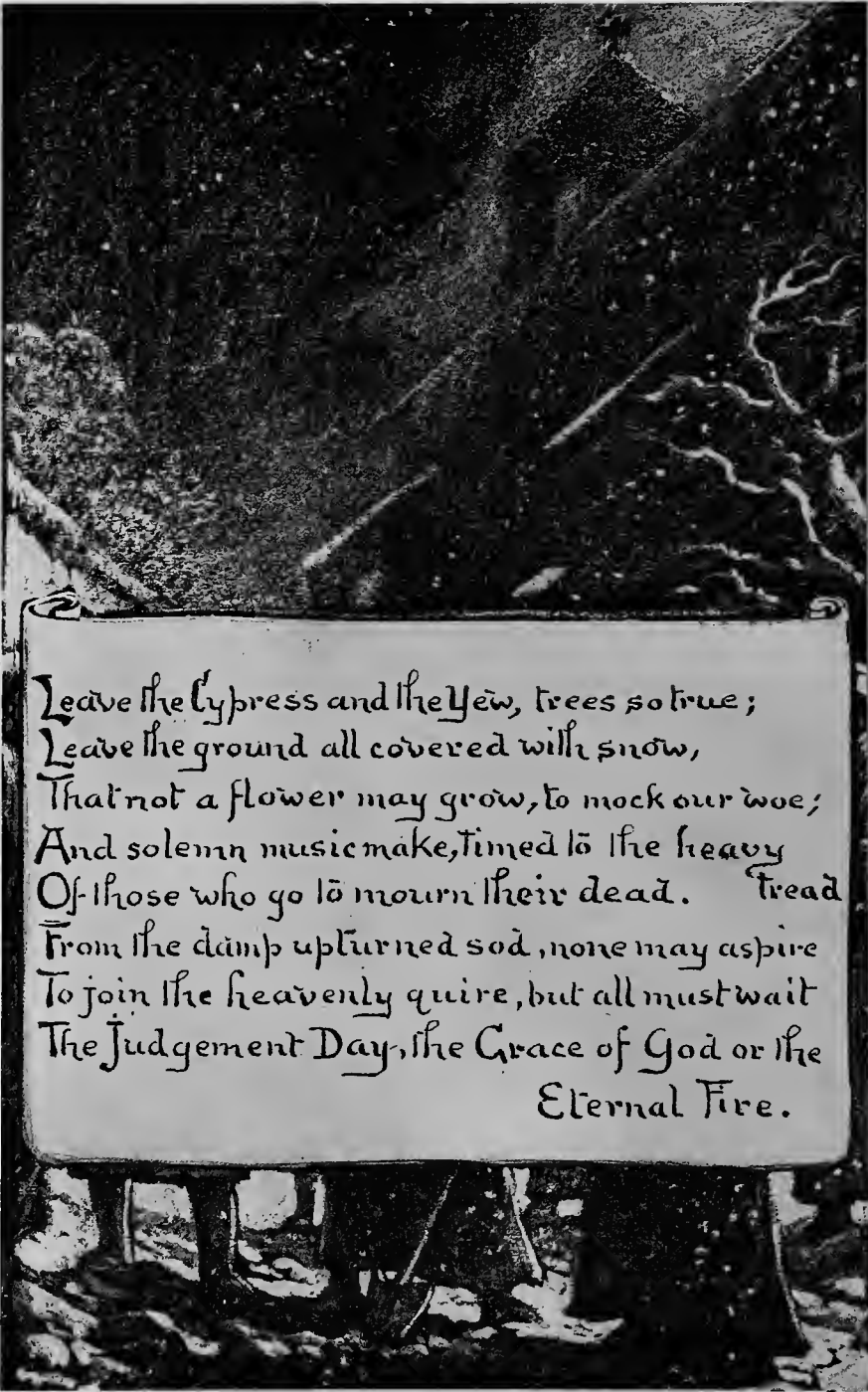
(Written at Capri, November 24, 1915, and, alas! still true in 1920.)



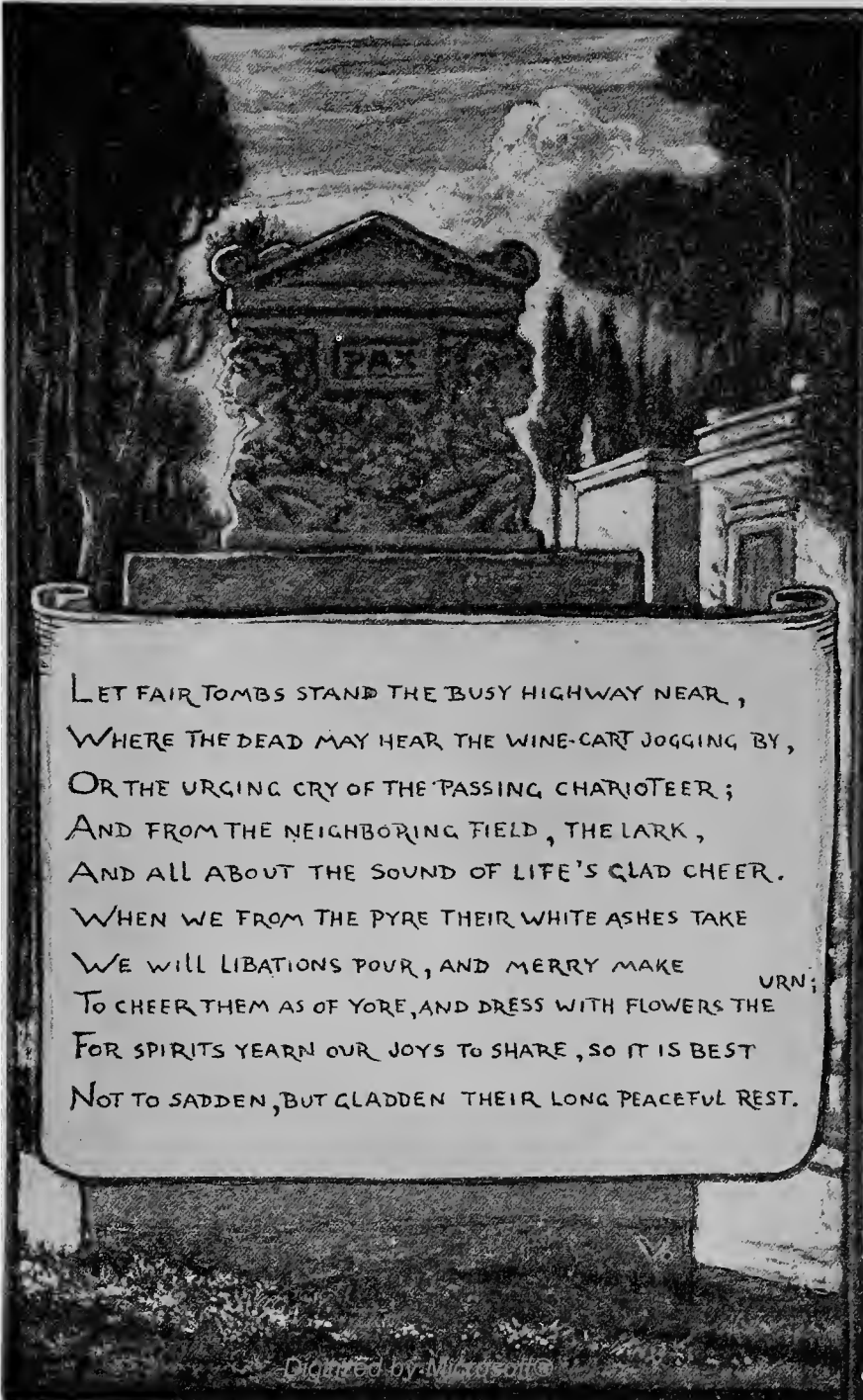
## The Symbol

If the Old Testament is true,  
This earth was made but for the Jew,  
Or for Jews whose views are broader  
Just Philistines enough to plunder.  
The rest may take for all they care  
Both Heaven and Hell,—the World's their share;  
Nor do they care to spread their creed,  
Well knowing the insatiate greed  
Of men for gold makes one vast Creed  
Where all join hands and gaily laugh  
As they go round the Golden Calf.  
For Jews and Gentiles now adore  
The Golden Calf just as before.



The background is a dark, grainy, and textured surface, possibly representing a cave wall or a piece of old parchment. A rectangular frame with decorative scrollwork at the corners is superimposed on this background. Inside the frame, there is a block of text in a calligraphic script. The text is arranged in ten lines, with the last two lines indented to the right.

Leave the Cypress and the Yew, trees so true;  
Leave the ground all covered with snow,  
That not a flower may grow, to mock our woe;  
And solemn music make, timed to the heavy  
Of those who go to mourn their dead. Tread  
From the damp upturned sod, none may aspire  
To join the heavenly quire, but all must wait  
The Judgement Day, the Grace of God or the  
Eternal Fire.



LET FAIR TOMBS STAND THE BUSY HIGHWAY NEAR,  
WHERE THE DEAD MAY HEAR THE WINE-CART JOGGING BY,  
OR THE URGING CRY OF THE PASSING CHARIOTEER;  
AND FROM THE NEIGHBORING FIELD, THE LARK,  
AND ALL ABOUT THE SOUND OF LIFE'S GLAD CHEER.  
WHEN WE FROM THE PYRE THEIR WHITE ASHES TAKE  
WE WILL LIBATIONS POUR, AND MERRY MAKE URN;  
TO CHEER THEM AS OF YORE, AND DRESS WITH FLOWERS THE  
FOR SPIRITS YEARN OUR JOYS TO SHARE, SO IT IS BEST  
NOT TO SADDEN, BUT GLADDEN THEIR LONG PEACEFUL REST.

## The Letter I

A word that needs but little spelling  
Stands for an imp in all minds dwelling,  
Or rather that selfish, tiresome elf  
Heard when a man talks of himself.

In print 'tis often turned to We,  
A thin disguise through which we see,  
As clearly as in milk the fly,  
He longs to use the letter I.

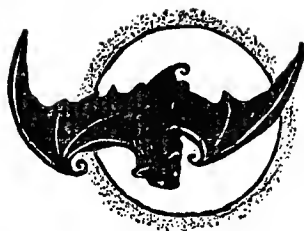




## The Sonnet

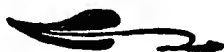
To one idea cling like death  
Scarcely stopping to take breath;  
Touch lightly on Mythology—  
Avoid like H. Theology—  
And plethoric Redundancy.  
Then climb that peak in Darien,  
And with Balboa and his men  
Gaze, not silently, around.  
Remember Sonnets are all sound  
Save in that slight expectant hush  
That follows your last fantastic rush,  
When—if you've kept your mind upon it—  
Your fourteenth line achieves—The Sonnet.





## A Sigh

Now come the dreamy days of Age  
When pleasures past as in a haze  
    Seem magnified;  
And present skies—however fair—  
    Seem overcast;  
Or if with sunset's hues made bright,  
Serve as the prelude to the night—  
    The dreamless Night.





## The Weeping Willow

Look gently on this old-fashioned tree  
Where dew has often been replaced by tears  
For in the drooping of its pendant leaves  
The tender color of undying Hope appears.



## To a Youth

This Truth no poet yet hath told,  
A Truth I now confide to Thee,—  
That Time is ever Young, not Old,  
As fresh as Venus from the sea;  
Ever leading by the hand

Priceless Opportunity.

Make her your bride or you'll regret,  
And yet, and yet, and yet, and yet,  
It's only now that I regret.



## A Dinner Declined

It is so neat—'All is illusion.'  
Shall I turn this to confusion  
By advocating things are real?  
Such as my years that Time doth steal.  
Do pangs nephritic—nothing seem  
To those who suffer—or a dream?  
Age may have Honor, not Immunity.  
So while I worship the Ideal  
I must regard my pangs as Real,  
And give up many pleasant things;  
Strange! how my heart with youth still sings.



## Verdun

An utter disregard of reason  
Filled the trenches of Verdun;  
Science is both good and evil,  
Neighbors the hospital and gun,  
As sharper grows Minerva's lance  
So greater grows the power of chance.

Of all the wasteful remedies  
War is probably the worst,  
And yet man turns to it the first;  
Strange cure in which the doctor kills  
His patient to remove his ills.

We see the mills of God grind slow,  
Effect from cause of course should flow,  
But from between the stones how know,  
Why grind at all, or grind so slow?

If the foregoing be a lie  
Pray cast about—what meets the eye?  
Alas! But for its melancholy  
A smile should greet such frightful folly.



## Up to Date

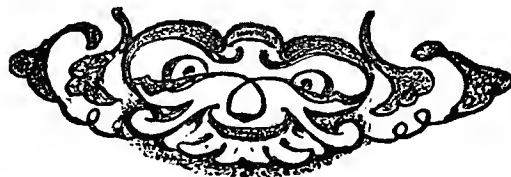
There is a power that shapes our ends  
Rough-hew them as we may,  
And roughly speaking that is what  
We see takes place today.

For in mysterious ways it moves  
And wonders it performs  
In wars and famines, pestilence,  
And devastating storms.  
And that is why all people say  
It moves in a mysterious way.

Napoleon was a providence—  
So it is held today;  
For Freedom's bird to George the Third  
A debt we owe today.

Through Bismarcks, Kaisers, Emperors,  
Great Frederick led the way,  
Up to the glorious Victories  
That are taking place today.

So have no fear—all must be right  
Where Kings and Providence unite,  
No matter on which side you fight  
Though the Devil is to pay.



## Packed Down

I make a poem I think fine,  
Each stanza like long hoarded wine  
Flowing smooth, mellifluous,  
Which then I fittingly enshrine  
In border quaint of twisted wine—  
A task perhaps superfluous.

But never felt I so 'packed down'  
As when a youth from London Town,  
A writer famed and witty,  
Passed on my decorated verse  
A judgement I think rather terse—  
'The border's very pretty.'





## Quotations

Do what you will, three fingers still  
You must employ in writing,  
These fingers are—With Grace and Power  
In various ways uniting;  
Also the Head leave not apart,  
But if from the Heart you wander  
Right from the start, with all your Art,  
Your pen and ink you squander.

Dear me, today how rhyme will stray!  
How far on its tide I've floated!  
For what I really meant to say  
Was—write what will be quoted.



(December 17, 1915. Capri.)

## The Hermit

'Gentle Hermit, dost thou dwell  
Contented in thy little cell?'  
'Aye, Pilgrim, once I followed long  
A Siren, listening to her song,  
Yet never could I reach her side,  
And now contented I abide.'  
'But tell me, Pilgrim, why dost roam  
So far from kindred, far from home?'  
'Hermit, I see beyond yon sky  
That cloudless lands forever lie;  
The road is long and short the day  
So I must hasten on my way.'  
'Stay, Pilgrim, stay, 'tis almost night.'  
'Nay, Hermit, nay—beyond 'tis bright.'

Do Sirens' songs but lead astray?  
The Hermit's cell prove but his tomb?  
Did the Pilgrim find the light  
Or was he lost in the night's gloom?  
Are those bright lands beyond the sky  
But dreams and not reality?  
Can Pilgrim tell—can Hermit say,  
That only Sirens lead astray?





## Luna

Lone gazer on Earth's dreaming night,  
Not always with unmixed delight  
We gaze on Thee, for thy pale rays  
Too often bring sad memories  
Of things forever gone and happier days.

## M.D.'s and D.D.'s

Doctors, in hunting a disease,  
Think they have killed or maimed it  
When truth to tell they've merely found  
An old one and renamed it.

So doctors of Divinity  
Will go on to infinity  
Trying to cure our moral ills  
Not with real bread, but with bread-pills.

They may be right but I feel sure  
That Life for us is a long cure  
Of an inherited disease,  
And doubt if Dr. Death gives ease.



## To William Graham

Now V. is very well informed  
And not averse to show it.  
Seek not to tell him something new—  
He's sure to say 'I know it.'

V. met one day his old friend G.  
And gave that opportunity  
For which G. long had waited,  
By saying—'Well, that's new to me.'  
'Thank God,' was the simple repartee,  
And G. went off elated.

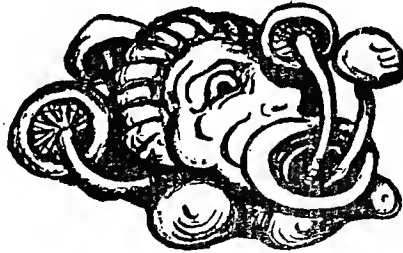
This friend whose name's unknown to Fame,  
(Who seems disposed to hide it)  
Will have, if we but wait, his day.  
Then V. will say 'I knew it.'



# Parody

Vile Parody's a parasite,  
A fungus growth, a dreaded blight  
That oft the noblest poem spoils.  
For Parody picks out the best  
And in it makes an 'ill bird's nest.'

This harpy of the clever mind  
Receives much praise but leaves behind  
An odor faint as of a tomb,  
Where lie fair flowers robbed of their bloom,  
Or sense of something lovely slain  
That never more will live again.



## The Victors

In Life's triumphant chariot ride  
The strong, and proudly wave aside  
    All sorrow, pain, and grief;  
Who breathing in the joy of life  
Cannot conceive that for the strife  
    One life is far too brief.

But clad like glorious kings of old  
In royal purple and in gold,  
    Heed not that pallid slave,  
That somber slave who mocks their pride,  
Forever whispering at their side,  
    'Thou goest to thy grave.'



## Revery

Old! Yes, but not in revery;  
Young, poor, and gloriously free—  
Today again I sketching go  
In thy fair land, Boccaccio.

See where my model waits for me  
Under that ancient olive tree;  
No classic nymph or dryad she,  
But a real girl in Tuscany.

Yet something classic lingers there,  
For Zephyrus toys with her hair,  
And in her softly shaded eyes  
Amor slyly lurking lies.

‘Cara, the sun is getting low,  
One kiss more and I must go;  
But where is that bright-eyed little fellow  
Who carries my box and my “ombrello”?  
“Peccato” that reveries must close.’  
‘Quando torni?’—‘God only knows.’

A sketch, and low! a revery;  
A sweet girl waits beneath a tree  
Forever in sunny Tuscany;  
At least in an old man’s memory.





## The Land of Song

Italy is 'The Land of Song.'  
The question is, good Lord, how long  
Can one this lasting rumpus stand  
Before he quits this lovely land?

Donkeys begin it in the spring,  
And urged by Love uproarious sing;  
The natives then take up the tale,  
And working or idle never fail  
To fill the air both day and night  
With sounds that harrow and afright.  
The loud piano's pounding note—  
Organic tunes ground out by rote—  
The beggar's passionate appeal—  
Midnight roisterers as they reel—  
The lover's agonizing yell—  
Suggest the usefulness of Hell.  
Add to which they never scorn  
To ply the tiresome auto's horn.

Such sounds kept up the live-long year  
So tire the much abused ear,  
That one begins at length to long  
To quit this lovely 'Land of Song.'



## Why Explain?

This picture I need not explain,  
In Art the last cry makes this plain—  
'Ideas are useless, Subjects vain.'  
If good design and vital line  
But strike the eye and satisfy  
In modern stuff—it is enough.  
Then why on earth should I explain?

Take out the 'if' and good design,  
Also omit the vital line,  
But shock, amaze, and strike the eye:  
You'll satisfy the 'Modern Cry.'



## A Fearful Thought

How silent Time steals on apace  
And with his blurring finger doth efface  
Our little footsteps, leaving not a trace,—  
Even when stamped on monumental brass  
Teaching the old lesson 'All must pass.'  
And yet 'tis said our careless words  
Live on when we are gone; mere breath  
Defying that dread change called Death.

Oh! fearful thought, shall we again  
Hear our own words? Perchance condemned  
By our own breath, and learn our doom  
In hollow whispers from the Tomb?



## Alfaru

Named by his parents Elihu,  
One Vedder built in Zanadu  
Or thereabouts, or did decree  
A spelling-dome (not spelling-bee)  
Or home for his new Alphabet  
Which with its cryptic letters set  
In-Corn-pre-hen-si-ble to Man,  
Its fated course too quickly ran  
Down to dark Omega's Sea.

This scheme called Alfaru looked fine  
And indeed 'twas grand to see,  
How each Sound had its proper Sign,  
How each Sign did with Sound agree.  
Now what occurred this scheme to balk?  
It made you spell just as you talk,  
Or made you talk just as you spell,  
In either case not very well,  
And so 'twas promptly sent—to Hell.



# Spelling

When by spelling sore beset  
    (My usual quandary)  
I seek at once without delay  
My Webster's Dictionary.

High would my Muse delighted soar  
On pinions light and airy,  
But what it knows its safety lies  
In Webster's Dictionary.

Saddled with which my Pegasus  
Plods on with footsteps wary.  
How can the poor thing sing and soar  
Under a Dictionary?



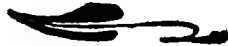


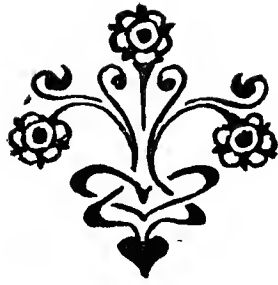
## To an Old Man

For thee thy race is run;  
All has been said or done,  
Thou hast the Victor's crown,  
Or—thou hast none.

Or stand forgotten,  
Thy wreath no longer green;  
Or crowned, thy crown  
As yet—unseen.

Better so, than seen by flashes  
Clothed in sackcloth and in ashes.





## Bitter-Sweet

Nature for her sweetest dish  
Prepares a bitter sauce,  
For what appears a present gain  
Turns out a future loss,  
As when the toiler once set free  
Turns out to be a Boss.

Here an old maxim comes in neat—  
'Accept the Bitter with the Sweet.'  
Did not Doubt ask 'Is this a Law?  
Or is it but an ancient Saw?'  
No ancient Saw—man's daily meat  
By a stern Law is—Bitter-Sweet.



## Hermits

Hermits we know as mild old men  
Sitting by caves or purling brooks,  
Engaged in prayer or telling beads,  
Observing skulls or reading books.  
Their food, they say, is brought each day  
To them by ravens or pious rooks.

We're never told of all those others  
Who fled the world their souls to save,  
Those poor wandering half-crazed brothers  
Who found in the desert but a grave.  
'Tis always the blessed ones who saw  
The Heavens opening to their eyes  
And Angels bright, with crowns and songs  
Welcoming them to paradise.







"WHO FLED THE WORLD THEIR SOULS TO SAVE"

## Classification

Now Critics all things classify  
And put a stamp on goods and brains,  
And going o'er a man's remains  
Either approve or crucify;  
And are much vexed in finding some  
They cannot put their stamp upon.

This one they find a mighty thinker,  
This a mere literary tinker,  
This seeming saint a fearful sinner,  
This volume thick ought to be thinner,  
This one was born before his time,  
This one too late to start the climb.

In fact their 'forte' is finding fault  
Chiefly in men we most exalt.



# Technique

## A KICK

Technique teaches Words should flow  
In ancient channels, cold as snow,  
Where frozen lines are born along  
Deprived of all that made them song;  
Then laid in Technique's narrow grave  
To moulder in oblivion.

If these thy lessons, fair Technique,  
Some other mistress must I seek.





## The Three Knights

Three glorious Knights came riding by,  
The very pink of chivalry.

'Had,' the regretful, slow of pace,  
'Have,' ever questioning 'Will-Have's' face,  
And 'Will-Have,' of the hopeful eye,  
All valiant Knights and famed.

'Had' once possessed the fair domains  
Where 'Have' precariously reigns;  
While 'Will-Have' gazes at the sky,  
Where his possessions mostly lie.  
Yes—they are aptly named.





Wistful Shade, was Thou just saying  
We were lovers long ago?  
Dost Thou think I can remember?  
It may possibly be so.  
Didst Thou say 'twas long ago?

True—I mind me of eyes gleaming  
As we see them when we're dreaming;  
Yes, and hair dark as night  
And hasty footsteps light  
And whispered greetings low,  
And fond arms about me clinging  
While a moon was somewhere shining  
And a nightingale was singing,  
In a garden long ago,  
Ah yes! I now remember,  
In Florence long ago.



## A Birthday Gift

Gentle Maid, be not afraid  
Your secret I'll disclose,  
From friends a waggon-load of flowers;  
From you, a single rose.  
A single rose as white as snow,  
Yet in this breast why such a glow?

## Aged Seventy-Four

A happy change  
Kind friends have wrought  
And made that extra four seem naught.  
Let them respect the seven;  
To take that off should they succeed  
I'd be reduced to naught indeed  
Unfit for earth or heaven.  
Better by far that they should see  
A frisky youth of seventy  
Signing himself sincerely



## A Precept

'Eat, drink, and be merry'  
Seems a jolly good rule  
When used with discretion  
But not like a fool.

As a sound moral precept  
It makes a poor show,  
Yet most of us use it  
(But we do not say so).

If you're going to glory  
Why be sad on the way?  
If you doubt getting there—  
Then brace up and get gay.

So with modifications  
I think we should try  
To use it a little,  
'For tomorrow we die.'

In other words,  
We either live forever  
Or through space our soul we scatter.  
In one case there's no hurry,  
In the other case—no matter.



## Heredity

A curious twist our mind oft takes  
Which may account for our mistakes,  
Our sluggishness or too great haste,  
Our lack of judgment or of taste.

Faults of our forefathers innate,  
Defects of very ancient date,  
Harking to days before our birth,  
And now the cause of blame and mirth.





## The Prodigal

'After a youth of dissipation  
Attend in age to your salvation.  
What matters a bit of youthful sin?  
Return, you may be taken in.'  
'Tis well the Prodigal should roam  
And well that sons should stay at home;  
They learn to care for fatted calves  
And with the Prodigal go halves,  
While he, just when he should return  
To eat the food he did not earn.

Now in this story we should see  
Not the gross partiality  
But, from strict Justice quite apart,  
The higher Justice of the Heart.



# Fame

Fame is the fleeting breath of men,  
Themselves as fleeting as their breath—  
Motes on the edge of Life's great wheel  
Ever revolving down to Death.

How hard they strive, each little mote,  
To leave some word that men may quote.  
If they succeed 'tis heard a day;  
Then quoted and quoter pass away.

But not so fast—for it is plain  
Eternal Striving doth remain  
And may be found when all is done,  
The very essence of the fun.

(May, 1920.)

## Superstition

How Superstition still holds sway  
Is shown in Stratford every day  
Where certain doggerel-guarded stones  
Hold undisturbed the poet's bones.

Indeed we think 'twill be the worse  
For that sacrilegious wight  
Who dares face that rustic curse  
And bring great Shakespeare's skull to light,  
And show what once was packed with wit  
Lying dull and void of it.

All long to see—but stop at that.  
Bold must he be, who bells that cat.

(June, 1920.)



## In Old Books

Thoughts sincere lie buried here covered with dust,  
And must like dust all disappear;  
Could they in tenuous threads span the abyss of Time  
And call up an answering echo in some heart  
As yet unborn—'twould be sublime.

---

Some page you'll find so thumb-marked, dirty, soiled,  
You'd think the book containing it quite spoiled,  
Until you come across some verse thereon  
When suddenly behold! the squalor's gone.  
As firefly grovelling on the dingy ground  
That bright thought shining in the dirt is found.



## The Bookworm

One is appalled—  
At volumes stalled in libraries,  
Where the bookworm works at ease  
On Lover's vows, and sighs and tears,  
Turning all to dust in a few years.

One is amazed—  
At things well phrased, lying unacted  
In volumes of forgotten plays;  
And astonished—  
That people so well admonished  
By endless sermons, should still sin;  
Sermons—dusty without and dry within.

One must be mad—  
To think that writings sad  
Can please—yet I don't know,  
Remembering Poe.

One must be chary—  
In judging things unliterary,  
Nor think works too gay or at their ease  
Cannot become 'the go' and please.

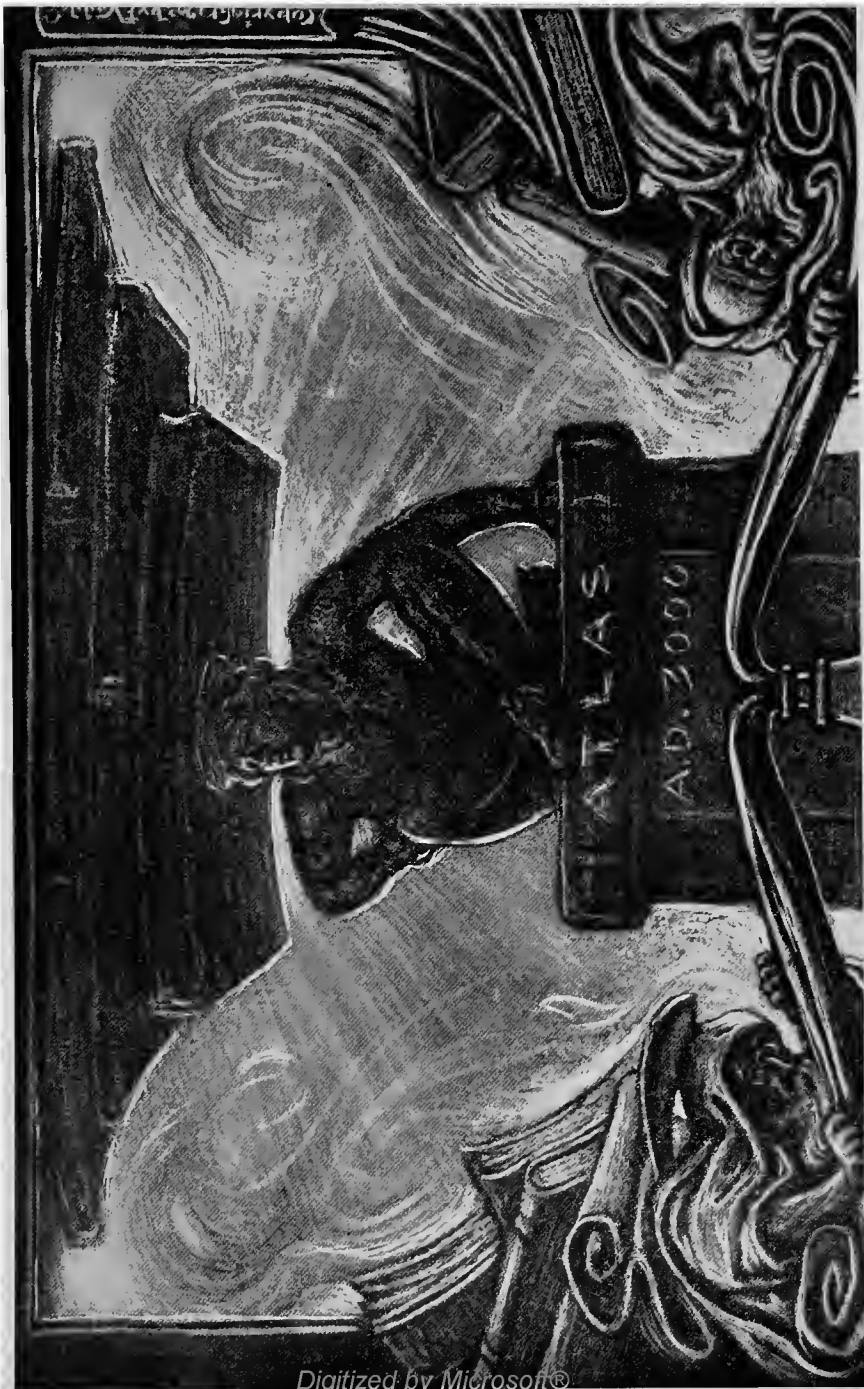
Meanwhile the moving finger writes,  
Then disappears,  
Together with the writing, the writer,  
And all his hopes and fears.



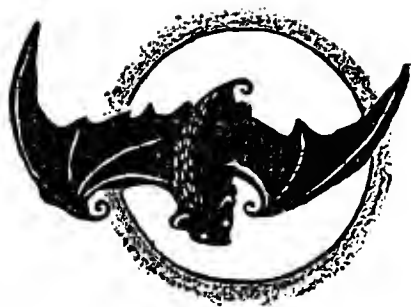
## Books

'Gainst Books, Time tries his tooth in vain,  
The pen exploits the busy brain,  
And Books in spite of Time and Chance  
Like Cadmus' famous teeth enhance,  
Or fabled Phoenix rise again  
Till fearful in the eyes of men  
Becomes the peril of the 'Pen.'





BOOKS



## Dreams

In dreams we never dream we're old,  
The dreams of age again unfold  
Visions of youth—we're never old.  
With dainty Ariel we'll go  
When set free by Prospero  
'After summer merrily.'

In a new world, under a sky  
Seen only by the poet's eye,  
For strange things and stranger still  
Did we but know it wait on will;  
Nothing's impossible to man,  
Therefore quit speckled Caliban  
And no longer moaning dwell  
Under Prospero's stern spell.







## The Beard

Many a man has grown a beard  
Snow white as pure unprinted pages  
On which the printing-press of Time  
Makes no impression as he ages.

The monkish hood makes not the Monk  
Nor can advancing age make Sages,  
Snow covers the volcanic peaks  
While just below the fire still rages.

At this Saint Peter nods his head.  
'Among the called the cool are chosen,  
The make up of a Saint,' he said,  
'Is but a Sinner nearly frozen.'



# The Eagle

The eagle seeks the highest peaks,  
Would he from thence the world survey?  
Not in the least—he's but a beast  
That hunger-driven seeks his prey.

But do we know if this be so?  
For something more he surely feels  
As circling high against the sky  
Slowly the earth beneath him reels.

It hath been said that Nature seems  
Quite blind to her own majesty,  
That human eyes alone enjoy  
Her beauty and sublimity.

May not the eagle's keener eye  
Share with man this ecstasy?



## His Vocation

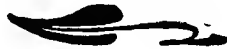
A Hermit stood at Heaven's gate,  
He entered not but hesitated:  
'This slothful scene of constant praise  
Is what I never contemplated!'

Fight has been my food and drink,  
Fighting Devils, and my delight  
Is hounding them to Hell's hot brink  
Where howling they plunge out of sight.

Lost in this press of Saints I'd be  
Sadly missing my vocation,  
How, or with whom, put up a fight  
Without a scrap of provocation?

Soft has become my flinty bed,  
Sweet, my austere solitude;  
Unregretted pleasures fled,  
Unshared, my great beatitude.

Back to my Devils and their din,  
One prayer I will sincerely raise—  
O Lord! forgive my only sin:  
I cannot sing eternal praise.



(Rome, May 23, 1920.)

## Smithereens

As I review life page by page,  
I've found in age—not in my teens—  
Things have been smashed to smithereens.  
My thirst for rest and restful ease,  
It seems I never can appease.

The domes I've reared with that intent  
Have all to smithereens been sent,  
Till now in age I seem to lean  
On fragments of smashed smithereens.

Thank God! one dome remains intact,  
That of Friendship, which in fact  
In spite of age yet brightly gleams  
Mid fragments of smashed smithereens.



## Two Fair Philosophies



There are two fair Philosophies,  
The one, too cheerful is and jolly;  
The other bears with her a skull  
And is inclined to melancholy;  
The first frequents the flowery meads  
And there continuously romps,  
The second, the sad church-yard needs  
For she enjoys funereal pomps.  
In fact she mourns enough for two—  
Her own, and someone else's sin,  
While number one, so full of fun,  
Wears one long optimistic grin.

Could I but find the two combined,  
The first with optimistic grin off,  
The second somewhat more inclined  
To leave her pessimistic air off,  
The fair result I'd gladly wed  
And take her to my board and bed.



## The Bended Bow

We hear the ring of the bended bow,  
When the arrow sharp hath fled,  
Only after do we know,  
How some stricken creature bled.

Often rings the careless laughter  
When some cruel word hath sped,  
And we only know long after  
How some tender heart hath bled.



## Words

Our words indeed may greatly vary  
    With a rich vocabulary,  
But some essential are as breath,  
Such Life, and Birth, and Love, and Death.  
With these four strings on which we play  
Begins and ends our short-lived lay.



## The Absent Cure

'I leave the harbor far astern,  
And face the open sea,  
And yet I can but sadly turn  
And fondly think of Thee.'

Thus did the Lover sob and sigh  
And think his life was blasted;  
Lord knows that life was sweet enough  
While that flirtation lasted.

He calls his Love a distant star,  
And cold—but much I fear  
That others find her warm enough,  
I mean those others near.

Now let him go to gay 'Paree'  
And cease on her to think,  
And if he's wise economise  
His paper, pen, and ink.





## Intensity

I'm lacking in Intensity,  
Death—to obtain a single kiss  
May be excruciating bliss  
And doubtless is in poetry,  
But were it left for me to say,  
Rather than Death—Satiety.

For when the kissing's once begun  
Do we see lovers stop at one?  
Real lovers have more common sense,  
And, considering the price,  
Although one kiss is very nice  
They leave that one to the 'Intense.'



## Songs of Indigestion

If this life is made up of complications,  
The next one must be passed in explanations;  
Perhaps Death cuts for us the Gordian Knot  
And turns 'what might be' into 'what is not.'

This life is but a kind of troubled bliss,  
Mixed with a somewhat mitigated pain;  
Our happiest times are naught but pleasant dreams,  
And even these we cannot dream again.

A pretty scheme indeed—a pretty business  
Not filled with ought-to-be-ness,  
But downright is-ness.  
Nothing obtained without a strenuous fight,  
Where many may be wrong to make one right.



## The Nude

Art, to puritanic minds  
Is, as it were, the entering wedge,  
Or the first glass, or the first step  
Leading to the broken pledge.  
They somewhat doubt this tendency  
(In a clothed age) towards Nudity.

All would be well were we but sure  
That Art could keep the Nude quite pure;  
But there's the rub, for who can say  
So much depends upon the way?  
'To the pure all things are pure.'  
Again the rub, we're not quite sure.



## Two Pictures of Snow

We felt it in the air, and lo! 'twas there;  
And childish faces turn from the ruddy glow  
And gaze into the speckled darkness of the night  
At the white multitude hurrying softly down,  
Covering all below with soft silent snow.  
And then their rest they take and dream of morn,  
When they shall wake to the marvel of that sight—  
A fair new world, clad in spotless white.

How sick I get of snow each year,  
But it costs dear. When I am home again  
And snow turns to rain and by frost is set,  
Or begins to melt—how sick I get  
Of snow, and the constant mackintosh  
And the lost galosh—forever lost—  
In slushy, influenza-breeding snow.





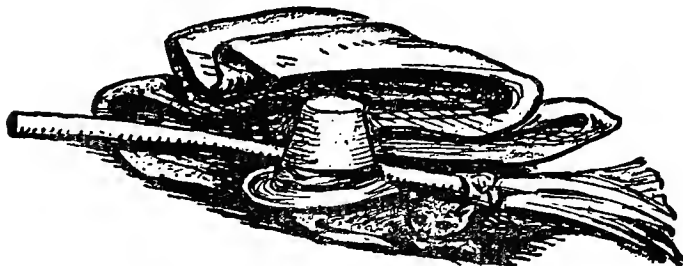
Mother Shipton's still alive  
And by her guesses seems to thrive,  
By her guesses right or wrong  
Mother Shipton gets along.

Men guesses right hail with delight,  
But guesses wrong forget outright;  
Truth is the guess, the best guess guessed  
But fails to guess which guess is best.

Her prophecy—

'God and Satan, Man between  
Was and is and will be seen,  
And of this truth we may be sure  
While Man's alive and worlds endure.  
And wars will see, and misery,  
And famine, pest, and poverty.'

Here Mother Shipton ends her song.  
If she be right she can't be wrong.



## Folly Enthroned

Once in superb Byzantium  
There wandered a demented maid,  
On rude pandian pipes she played—  
Her only speech—for she was dumb.

Such in the east they hold inspired,  
So when she mounts the Sultan's throne  
And wildly plays or makes her moan,  
Into the omen they inquired.

They found no greater prophecy  
Or better emblem can be shown  
Of a nation's quick decay  
Than Folly seated on a throne.





## A Protest

I know that good things can be turned from their uses  
Into fearful abuses, as well as the rest,  
But between prohibitions and people with missions  
I hope Moderation will turn out the best.

I know that our ancestors fought for their freedom,  
But I cannot believe that our backbone is such  
That it bends to the sway of a pack of reformers  
Who themselves cannot tell 'just enough' from 'too  
much.'





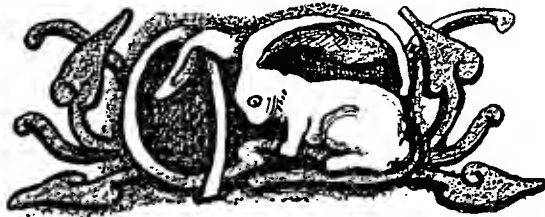
## Beer and Belly

No doubt that good beer was designed for the belly,  
No doubt that the belly enjoys the good beer,  
As it does the welsh-rabbit when found hot and handy  
Add to these the good friend with his smile and his  
tear.

No doubt that some saints while disliking this picture  
Will promise instead lovely robes white as snow,  
And places on pinnacles lofty ascending,  
But I prefer standing by these good things below.

‘Dear me,’ cries the saint, ‘how you cling to your  
body!

But what will you do when from hence you must go?’  
Why, I’ll hunt up old friends and grow a new belly,  
But I doubt if much better than the one left below.



## John Beats Thomas

One thing in Nature another eats,  
And by another thing is eaten:  
In Grammer—it is John who beats  
And Thomas who is always beaten.

In this see that 'Mysterious way'  
About which we must nothing say  
Or reason, lest we be accused  
Of what is called—Impiety.

But we may say that Grammer's way  
Shows a strange partiality  
Unknown to Nature—who we see  
Beats John and Thomas equally.

So when we learn that fire will burn  
From fire we try to keep away,  
Also from that 'Mysterious way'  
Which shows no such partiality.

Can such discordant notes unite  
And form an unheard harmony?  
Which only gifted ears can hear—  
Vibrations of the 'Mystery.'



## Quaint Questions

Philosophers of lofty brow  
Seem very anxious for to know  
From whence we come and where we go—  
Before they know what we are now.

If they find Men are now but Fools  
According to great Nature's rules  
Most surely fools they must become,  
At least this can be said of some.

Do wild-cats ever change their habits  
And become as mild as rabbits?  
Lengthen their ears and drop their claws  
Following Nature's unknown laws?

Curates are mild, are Bishops so?  
Yet Bishops out of Curates grow.  
Doth Nature show us here two rules,  
One for the Wise and one for Fools?

We oft see Fools of lofty brow,  
We ask not how they come and go,  
We only know we have them now,  
Some things we guess at—Fools we know.



# The Praying Mantis

Does the Mantis really pray?  
Her hands uplifted to the sky,  
Or is it her little comedy,  
We know she really means to slay.

Believing in this pious show  
Her lovers fond around her crowd,  
But she omitting heads and legs,  
Becomes for them a bright green shroud.

Where, in her body fair, they lie  
Forming a happy family  
Which self-supporting as you see  
Seems the reward of piety.

So trust not Nature when she's bland,  
Not always under gloomy skies,  
Oft where bright sunshine floods the land  
The earthquake's densest danger lies.



**Note:—The Mantis, it is said, after a short period of dalliance, devours all her lovers, wisely omitting heads and legs as indigestible, —see Natural History.**

**We know she eats them one by one.  
Is it from hunger or in fun?**

## Naughty Spirits

While waiting on the gloomy shore  
For old Charon and his skiff,  
I noticed many spirits swore  
With a But, or with an If—  
'Damn it, but I didn't think;  
Damn it, if I'd only thought;  
I wish his damned old boat would sink'  
Or, 'If an obolus I'd brought.'

So these light wights in debt get in  
The heavier for this added sin.  
While Charon toting them across  
Muttered sadly—'Profit and loss.'





The flowery bells of breezy Spring  
Set Lover's hearts and voices ringing,  
'Tis but the lusty voice of May,  
Singing while she is sowing,  
That sets these pretty things agoing.

Lovesickness mostly soon is cured,  
At least its pains can be endured,  
They are the growing pains of Spring  
And not at all a serious thing.  
'Twas ever thus in spring.

Among the good there's someone bad,  
Among the jolly—someone sad,  
So in the spring while all things sing  
One sadly goes a-sorrowing.  
And so it was with this poor Faun,  
Sitting grumpy all alone  
His merry pipes abandoning.

He'd sought the forest's deepest shade  
To mourn a wayward fickle Maid,  
Till he no longer silent stayed,  
But doleful lamentations made,  
Remembering his philandering.

I said—'Why mourn that fickle Maid  
And lamentations sing?  
Thou knowest well, as well I know,  
'Tis ever thus in spring. Another spring,  
Another Maid, as sweet as May will bring.

'In sunny glades with such-like Maids  
You'll while away the spring;  
Until she leaves you like the rest  
And then again you'll sing,  
As you have often sung before,  
"'Twas ever thus in Spring."

'Out of the darkness of the night  
Perchance some owl may mock your plight,  
And echoing your sighs may sing,  
"With you—'twas ever thus in spring,"  
Till Echo's voice diminishing  
Says faintly—"Ever thus in in spring,"  
Reiterating—"Thus in spring,"  
And finishing—"In spring."



Note:—This was the original as written by E. V., not the version printed in "Moods."

## The Dreaming Mountain

Great Nature, dreaming, thinks in her deep way,  
For through her massive portals we catch gleams  
Of her mysterious thoughts and mighty dreams;  
Yet seems she strangely blind to her own majesty.  
Is it for us to see, or hath she seen  
That Man up through these portals will some day  
His own creative, emulous imagery display?

---

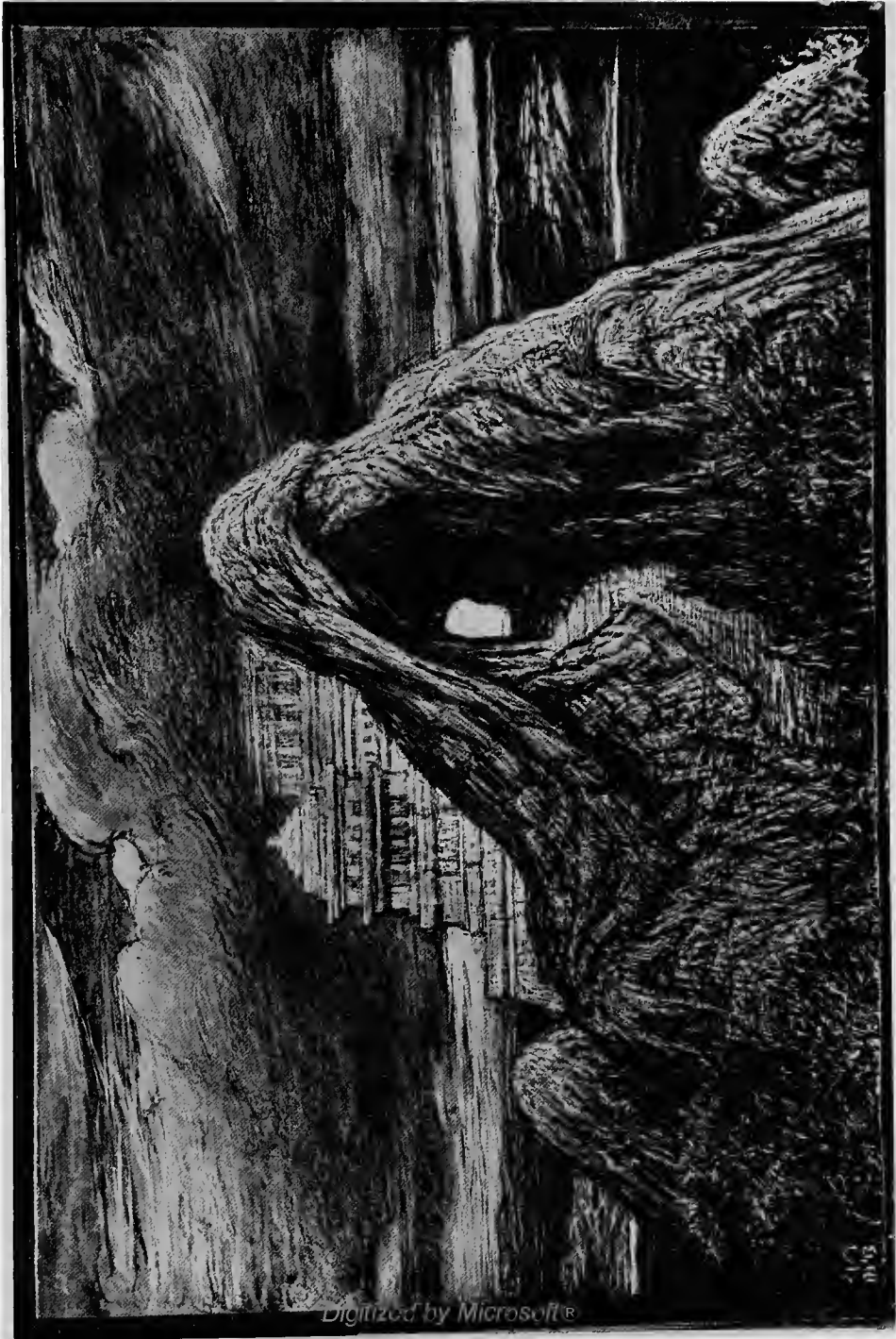
## Pride

With body insignificant  
In mind Man ranges near and far,  
From blade of grass to distant star  
In Will all but omnipotent.





THE DREAMING MOUNTAIN



## Mirth's Music

Man in life's labyrinth strange music hears  
Of labor, in the drone of Egypt's groaning wheels,  
Of pleasure, in those soft voluptuous reels  
Danced near the Danube's ever flowing tide.

Sometimes it flutters down from out the sky,  
Then 'tis the happy Lark's mad minstrelsy,  
Or rising nearer earth with silvery notes  
The unseen Tree-toad's trilling symphony.

But come, fair Goddess Mirth! and bring today  
Thy music—and with me let it abide;  
Murmur of loved voices gone, or far away,  
Mayhap faint laughter from dark Lethe's side.

Enough the sermons and the sorrows are!  
Enough the noise of Life and its stern jar!  
So come, Thou dimpled Goddess, stay with me,  
Or if Thou needs must go—then let me go with Thee.



## To Holland

Holland, thou wast not born of Doubt,  
Doubt never checked the wild North Sea,  
Nor did it drive away that blight,  
The blight of Spanish bigotry.

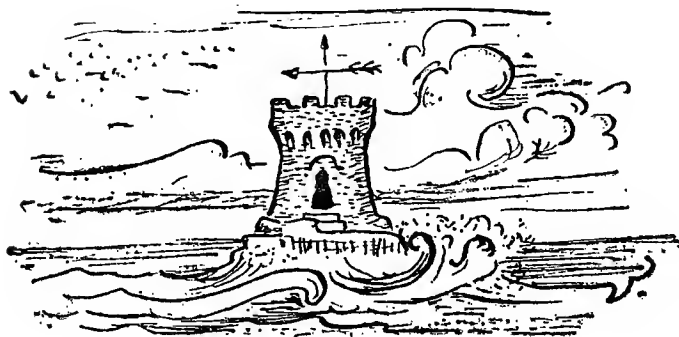
A dogged Faith in Man himself,  
And not in mouldering bones of Saints,  
Is why the blessed Sun now paints  
With Hope's bright green thy meadows free.

Faith in thy strength, Faith in thy right,  
Drove back the sea, drove back the blight;  
And now, o'er fields restored to light,  
Blows the sane breath of Liberty.





I build my house upon a rock,  
A rock that rests on sand;  
The sand rests on another rock  
And so throughout the land.  
The land an island in the sea,  
In both too much uncertainty.  
So now I build my house on air,  
Mere Fancy rears a golden dome,  
Will it hereafter be my home?  
I look on clouds and see it there.  
Some wandering wind may find a key  
And show what I alone can see  
Ere with the clouds it drifts away,  
Yet how I long to have it stay.



## Good Advice

To all ye men advanced in years  
Who having ears, yet hear,  
I'll tell you of a little plan  
To free your minds from fear.  
Buy quickly a small Annuity  
And live without anxiety.  
Thus while you live  
You still can give  
But dying naught can leave;  
So all will wish you long may stay  
And when you really go away  
Over your grave will grieve.





The Optimist asserts that Life  
Is like a Persian rug unrolled,  
Where all the rainbow hues he sees  
Are lovely flowers picked out in gold.

The Pessimist in Life beholds  
A poor rag-carpet Fate unfolds  
Worn and soiled by the constant tread  
Of those who sadly earn their bread.

Truth finds the vaunted Persian rug  
Is a mere modern imitation,  
And the rag-carpet not so bad,  
Needing a little reparation.



(April 21, 1915.)

# Venus

Venus! get Thee gone!  
With all thy loves and doves.  
Why come gliding over the purple sea  
On thy dainty shell  
Letting thy warm glances dwell  
Again on me?  
I who have been so well  
With only memory.

Would'st light again the fires  
Of my desires?  
On the altar where they as ashes lie?  
Go—saucy hussy, get Thee gone!  
Over the shining water  
To thy native sky.



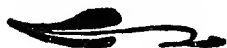


## Smaller by Degrees and Beautifully Less

With the first blast from out Life's stormy sky,  
Youth's fairy fabric shattered at his feet doth lie,  
But Youth and Hope together mend the damage done,  
And soon another lordly palace greets the sun.

That too and others just as fast go down  
Before adversity and the world's frown.  
Grown wiser, he builds smaller by degrees  
Until he's happy in a hut to take his ease,

Resigned to reap the harvest he has sown,  
Contented with a roof that he can call his own.







## Bubbles and Baubles

Verse-making is a bad disease,  
A little printing gives it ease,  
Success indeed might work a cure  
But of success no one is sure.

Make, if you can, but one good rhyme  
That will resist the tooth of Time,  
Or like a bubble lightly ride  
Sparkling on Time's restless tide.

Baubles and bubbles—crowned, uncrowned,  
Count as one in lives renowned;  
Where oft a monarch's silly jest  
Of all his deeds remains the best.



(N.B.—See Charles the First.)

## The Outline

Show me the man to vice inclined  
Who yet resists with steadfast mind,  
And I'll show you a Saint designed  
By Nature, or at least outlined.

Perhaps this may be Nature's way  
She gives the outline or outlay  
Which we fill up as best we may.  
How then on Exhibition-day?  
When we our masterpiece display,  
Sign we the work our own creation  
Or meekly state 'Collaboration.'



## Miracles

At Miracles be not dismayed,  
Of Jonah's whale be not afraid,  
The miracles of flower and fly  
Are greater—and that they should die  
Made and remade, unceasingly.

Strange it may seem, but we find out  
That Miracle is born of Doubt.  
For given Mind and Mystery  
At once the birth of Doubt we see.  
Or if playfully inclined  
Imagine Mystery minus Mind—  
Or turn it the other way about,  
And fancy Miracle less Doubt.



## The Advent of Man

At first the Elements beheld with glee  
That upright cub we now call Man,  
But when they saw within his grasp the glint  
Of a rude axe, fashioned of splintered flint,  
Throughout their ranks a mighty shudder ran.  
And now they see him strike the bird in flight,  
Drag out the scaly monsters of the sea,  
Warm himself and brood by self-made fire  
And light his gloomy cave's obscurity;  
From whence born on the air  
Strange sounds they hear  
Of throbbing, diabolic revelry;  
Thus seeing Man rise from the sod, they fear  
The advent of a Devil or a God is near.





## The Pessimistic Maze

Fancy its circlings—canyons great  
Where light can scarcely penetrate,  
Its lofty walls o'erwrit with lies  
Or Nature's mysterious verities.

The center vast, dense silence fills  
Or at the best vague whisperings;  
No certainty has yet been found  
But Death to end the weary round.

What scheme imagine? What devise  
To find your way amid these lies?  
You wander by a dubious light  
While all about reigns hopeless night.

How came you there, you do not know;  
Nor whence, nor where, nor why, you go.



## The Slot

Death's like the penny in the slot,  
Something we get—we know not what,  
Nor do we care so much to know  
That into that slot we care to go.

Now you may think this fun misplaced,  
Yet surely funny it would be  
Finding a game we held as chance  
Was betting against certainty.

What if the bitter tear we mop  
Or spend life in frivolity?  
Great Nature comes not to a stop  
Nor stops her old fecundity.

She says—'Increase and multiply,  
What if I give the weeping eye?  
I give the cure, the remedy,  
In careless gay hilarity.'

One of her lies. Can this be told  
To those who barely taste of life,  
Or early perish in the strife  
Before Life's glory they behold?

For you this moral is enough:  
Cast not Life's penny in the slot  
In hopes of getting God knows what—  
Yet don't put up too big a bluff.

# The Boomerang

Many on the woolsack sit  
As Judges who are most unfit.  
'Judge not lest you be judged,' a rule  
Among the best that we have found,  
A boomerang that circling round  
Finds out the spot where we're unsound,  
Or, quoting Johnson, we should say:  
'Unsound fundamentally.'



[196]



# Culture

Culture may make the cabbage grow  
Till fit for horticultural show,  
But it remains a cabbage still.  
That is culture's bitter pill,  
That cabbage still.

But no. But no. Science now cries:  
Take with the cabbage proper pains,  
You yet may make a head with brains.  
Of course no brain will live to see it,  
But we'll try it.



## Too True

Mid all the longings of the heart  
The Future forms the brightest part.  
How will it be with us at last  
With all our Future in the Past?  
Ah! Youth, this is not so with you;  
In Age alas! 'tis but too true.



# Hell

We've changed the name, the thing's the same,  
In hopes it may take off the curse;  
We suffer now a Mental flame—  
Not Physical—which is the worst?



# The How and Why

Things ask no questions in this wondrous world,  
Silently the golden sunsets are unfurled  
And tinged the drops in Hope's prismatic bow,  
And so, Man only of all things below,  
(Unlike the honest plants and flowers)  
Passes his hours, scanning earth and sky,  
Eternally asking the How and Why?

(1919.)



(A quotation from Maurice Hewlett.)

"There are at least two persons in each of us, one at least of which can course the starry spaces, and inhabit where the other could scarcely breathe for ten minutes."

---

(Montaigne—see Florio's translation and spelling—not mine!)

"If as some say, to philosophate is to doubt, with much more reason to rave and to fantastiquise, as I do must necessarily be to doubt: for to inquire and to debate belongeth to a scholler, and to resolve appertaineth to a cathedrall master."

---

## Philosophers

We picture them as wise old men  
Far past youth and its temptations,  
A wand in hand, a little sand  
Whereon to trace their demonstrations,  
Seated on well-carved marble benches  
Too cool for thin-clad classic wenches.

There under academic trees  
They pour forth wisdom at their ease  
In various forms of eloquence  
But always to an audience.

This wisdom's only for the wise,  
One sage another verifies,  
That is approves, quotes, or denies.

Of course we read them once or twice  
But do not follow their advice  
Nor really profit by their lore.  
We simply sit and read some more.

Are we then given to understand  
That wisdom must be second-hand?  
When Science teaches us each day  
That Truth lies just the other way?



## Don't Call Me Mister, Call Me George

Sweet mistress mine, 'tis May, let's go a-maying,  
Thy glorious hair like Eve unbind  
As through the garden we go straying,  
And bring with Thee a merry breeze  
To set the trees and rushes singing.  
But as we rove in silent grove  
And I with pleading sigh begin a-wooing,  
Mention not age, nor call me thy dear sage,  
For that of all my fun would be the undoing.



## Illusions

Ah! the wild music and the dizzy whirl,  
And the timed footsteps on the level floor,  
And two hearts beating, and glances meeting,  
And tresses entangling ever more;  
Could such things last forever?  
Alas! they passed forever  
Like those light footsteps  
On that dusty floor.

If such things but illusions be,  
Haste and make an end of me,  
For they're more precious in my eyes  
Than 'skinny Saints in paradise.'  
So sang a singer long ago,  
But we have changed all that, you know.  
Now, we shall have just what we please  
According to modern theories.



## A Chinese Picture

Rising from a sapphire sea  
An emerald island I espy,  
Where dreaming in a turquoise sky  
Pearly clouds stretch lazily,  
While beneath a golden tree,  
A little deer for company,  
An old Sage sits in revery.

No changes mar this peaceful scene  
Unvarying from year to year,  
Its emerald grass is always green  
And on it lies the dappled deer.  
The pearly clouds dream o'er the sea  
While deep in thought beneath the tree  
The Sage remains in revery.

Where lies the charm? In changeless sky?  
Or breathes it from the sapphire sea?  
Or is it the little dappled deer  
That keeps the old man company?  
Whate'er it is, its tranquil peace  
Pervades my heart and troubles cease.







A CHINESE PICTURE

## Compensations

No need to cheer up the rosy-gilled Optimist  
Who swears he is happy as happy can be,  
But rather encourage the grumpy old Pessimist  
And lavish on him all your spare sympathy.

But we must confess twixt ourselves and the lamp-  
post  
That Rosy-gill's not so infernally gay,  
And that grumpy old P., while wrapped up in his  
sorrow,  
Gets a great deal of comfort in his pensive way.

Whence we conclude that there are compensations  
Which make of the Sad and the Gay but a pair,  
And that in the course of the earth's revolutions  
Things, after all, pan out pretty fair.

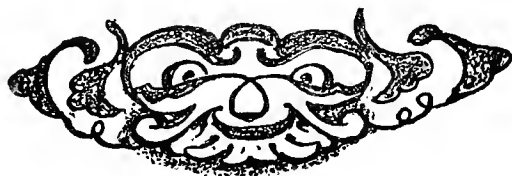


(June, 1920)

## Humbug

How often have I tried to lug  
Into my verse the word Humbug,  
And also hoped the thing to kill  
But as in verse, I lack the skill.  
Unlike Hydra, one vital head  
In Humbug lives among the dead,  
And sprouts and breeds, we always find,  
In various forms after its kind.

Saint George the dragon is ever killing,  
And in some pictures the beast seems willing  
To meekly come and take its gruel.  
This on the artists' part looks cruel,  
But Humbug's real—give it real pain  
And make it squirm again and again.



# Camera Lucida and Camera Obscura

Did angels singing as Creation dawned,  
Know of the thousand monsters that were spawned?  
Do two great laws preside in Nature's scheme:  
One for the things that are—one for the things that  
seem?

When angels sing, how is composed the song?  
Is it composed of two parts, Right and Wrong?  
Can laws of harmony unite these two?  
Do discords count as nothing, are they few?

You may not say these questions are but seeming,  
They form the very tissue of Life's dreaming.  
Primitive monsters of the labouring mind,  
They wander in huge freedom unconfined  
Through the hushed watches of the lonesome night,  
With gloomy questionings our sad soul affright.

Come, gentle Dawn—bring the fresh breath of Day,  
Open the window—let in the cheerful light,  
And drive these fearful monsters all away.



## Autumn

Old Men say—

That happy days they still find in the autumn,  
When squirrels rustle among the leaves,  
That golden grain they still find in the furrows  
Left long ago from the over-full sheaves,  
So they say.

Old Men say—

How sweet 'twas to linger when young  
Under the peaceful harvest moon,  
That now the winters are longer and colder,  
And that they come oftener and much too soon,  
So they say.

Yet Old Men say—

That some of the sweetest though saddest colors  
Are found in the west, at close of day,  
But night coming on, and friends all departing,  
They go themselves with the twilight away,  
Alas! so they say.



Note:—This was the original as written by E. V., not the version printed in "Moods."

# A Cure for Insomnia

(THE ARTIST'S)

Insomnia—child of incessant thought,  
Nursed in darkness by thy mother Care,  
Sad sister of the dread Nightmare,  
And her infernal gang led by Remorse  
    Followed by pale Despair—  
How oft Thou sittest by my sleepless couch  
Pointing to that oriental drug,  
That lethal thug who promises  
With Aladdin-dreams to free the mind  
From strife—yet tangles  
With ever tightening coils the Soul  
To a dull semblance of Death in Life—  
    I'll draw Thee—  
And seeing what Thou art clearly portrayed  
Henceforth regard thy horrors undismayed.



## The Classic

This is a subject Doubt would prove,  
What Classic helps afflicted Job  
When with such grandeur he deplores  
His many maladies and sores?  
Yet once his indignation past  
To his integrity holds fast.

And Homer of the bay-crowned brow,  
Of course he is a Classic now,  
But Doubt would know how class him when  
Crownless and blind he sang to men,  
As bowing his venerable head  
From door to door he begged his bread?

Call it but Classic, 'tis enough  
To purify the vilest stuff.  
So the worst filth of Greece and Rome  
In our best schools is quite at home.



## Fourth of July 1914

The sun rose on our glorious Fourth,  
Bringing a cool wind from the north  
Crisping the tepid southern sea  
With a fresh sense of Liberty.  
Alas! 'twas burdened with the knell  
Of a young monarch's funeral.  
Now thousands must in mourning go  
To prison, exile, or to death,  
In compensation for the blow  
That robbed one mortal of his breath.





## Fame

What is this Fame? 'tis but a name  
Banded about the world a bit,  
It must be sweet when men deem meet  
To risk their lives obtaining it.

But as for me, I'll let it be  
To come or go as it sees fit,  
Contented with my little share  
If it with me will bide a bit.

And yet—I want a little more,  
I hardly know what it should be,  
Perhaps a smile, perhaps a sigh,  
Or something to catch the passing eye  
Writ on my tomb, that this will say  
'On earth he lived—he did not merely stay.'



(Revised September, 1914.)

## Rhyme and Reason

I find those verses are the worst  
Where all the rhymes are thought out first,  
And limping Reason hobbles in  
To save it from poetic sin.  
Some even say that what is meant  
Is but the fruit of accident,  
And they are right, for half the time  
We often see the tyrant Rhyme  
Puts poets in this paltry plight,  
That, starting out to say one thing,  
The very opposite they sing.



## An Excuse

These lines treat not of bread and butter,  
No fool is sent home on a shutter,  
    No 'Pippa passes.'  
Readers are never made to feel  
    They are but asses;  
And painful mental vivisection  
May be avoided by selection.  
Yet they're defective, that I own,  
For which defects I make atone  
By having ready this retort—  
I've made them very, very short.



## Those Days

With all the Dancers duly set,  
We danced some pleading minuet  
Which figured well the goings on  
Of those days and our merry set,  
That once so merry set.  
But now with pretty ghosts alone  
I dance that pleading minuet.

## Could I But Know!

Careless youth scattered, as if it little mattered  
How, or where, or when the golden grain was sown;  
Had it but known!

Closing the weary eyes gives the brain no reposing,  
It sadly goes on reaping what it has sown,  
Had it but known!

Old Age again sowing but this well knowing,  
It never will gather the harvest it now sows,  
Can only murmur to itself, meekly and low,  
'Could I but know!'



THOSE DAYS

## An Old Man's Song

Time—for a moment hold thy glass  
So that Life's sands no longer pass,  
'Twill be great sport to look them o'er  
And then make up the motley score,  
A mass inchoate as this verse,  
And like it, might have been much worse.

The common sand of Sweet Content I somehow miss,  
And the rare pearls of Perfect Bliss;  
The golden grain of Wealth is somewhat rare  
But dull green grains of Discontent and Care  
Are there.

And of sparkling diamond grains of pleasure  
A good measure.

But ruby gems of Love and coral beads of Passion  
I must count in,

Mixed with jet black specks of Sin.  
Yet, to be fair, some pure white grains  
Of Truth and Honesty abide, and purple Pride;  
Nor must I leave out of the calculation  
Some small, much broken particles of Reformation.

Dark are the grains that mark the death of friends,  
But why trouble borrow? we go ourselves tomorrow.  
Then comes a lot of dull disgusting stuff  
Which taken in the mass must stand for Pain,  
Repentance, carking Care, and Melancholy,  
And taken in the rough, are far from jolly.

But is it best to calculate the rest?  
The remaining grains that have as yet to run?  
For there is one that soon or late stops all the rest,  
Stops even breath—and that is—Death.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

Set up the glass, Old Time,  
And while we may we'll sing.  
We now are old and past our prime  
And all have had our fling;  
We all have had our fling, old friend,  
We all have had our fun,  
So set up the glass again, old Time,  
And let the mixed sands run,  
And let the last sands run.



## A Questioning Sage

A questioning Sage was seen scratching his head;  
The answer 'tis plain was not there,  
When after a silence he suddenly said,  
'I always think better when lying in bed,  
I never could think in a chair.'

So he hies him to bed and has a good nap,  
But on waking as clear as a bell  
The answer (which does not amount to a rap,  
So I think) he refuses to tell.





## The Seven Sages

The Seven Sages all agreed  
They very little knew,  
That wise men were not many,  
The very wise but few,  
And that the very wisest said,  
'I know no more than you.'

This being so, a modern Sage  
May stand among the rest,  
Who says that what he does not know  
Is what he knows the best.

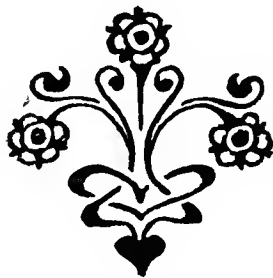
Now this is not mock modesty  
For that would never do,  
And what he thinks about himself  
He also thinks of you.



## Aunt Eveline

How dear to my heart  
Are the dreams of my childhood,  
But one cherished dearly  
Is of—Aunt Eveline,  
Who from the ripe currant  
Was want to make yearly  
(By a miracle surely)  
What she pleased to call wine.

This wine she oft proffered  
With cakes of her baking,  
For which it is whispered  
She had taken 'the bun'  
And the cakes were not wasted  
But by me never tasted  
Was what one painful lesson  
Had taught me to shun!



## Father William

What makes Father William  
So eternally clever  
Has never been settled,  
And I doubt if it ever  
Will be by will-power  
No matter how willing,  
Yet the secret he offers  
To sell for a shilling.

My palm cross with silver,  
The gipsy premises,  
And then you can safely  
Stand by for surprises,  
And prophecies also  
Which although not true  
And you laugh at so slyly  
Yet believe in them too.

Between knaves and fools  
This rule's good enough,  
The smaller the price  
The poorer the stuff,  
The greater the price  
The bigger the bluff.



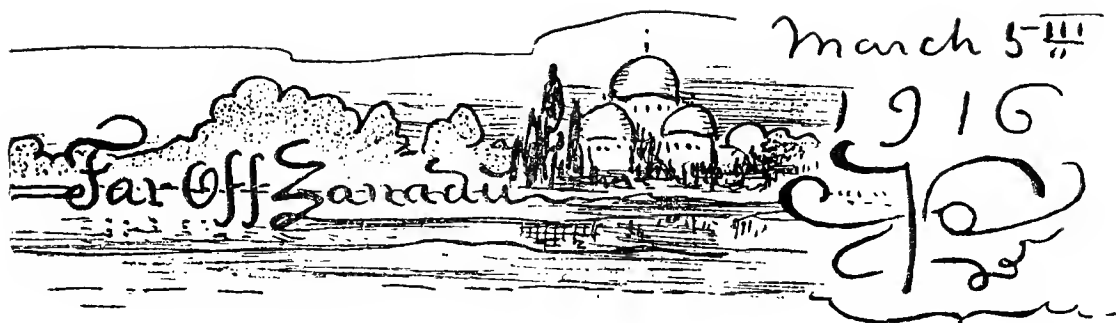
# A New Year's Greeting

[A.D. 1909]

Old Sol is out today, or rather say  
Apollo—and I would gaily sing,  
For never have I felt, even in spring,  
More springlike than I do today.  
Sign of approaching age? So let it be—  
With me life's sun is stooping low  
And what remains of youth is but the glow.  
Old friends seem dearer and years no drearer;  
Of new friends I can count a score—and by and by,  
Under another sky, I may find more.

This song I sing for all on New Year's morn,  
Hoping this New Year's sun a glorious course may  
    run,  
Ending as he began with sunny locks unshorn.





We loved, it may be madly,  
In far-off Zanadu,  
And then we parted sadly  
And bade a last adieu.

Had we then solved the mystery—  
Read to the end Love's history,  
In far-off Zanadu?

It seems a perfect irony  
Fond love should be but vanity  
And passion end in satiety,  
Leaving but ruined pleasure domes  
In far-off Zanadu,  
Even in Zanadu!



## Herford's Fly

I merely kill a tiresome fly,  
Thine activity I transfer  
To another sphere—mayhap nearby,  
For here Thou art too near my nose,  
So thine account I close, hoping  
For repose and sweet tranquility,  
And no more talk of Thee and Me.

Vain hope! for when I see Thee dead,  
A miracle of life wiped out,  
Enters creeping Doubt, and questions old  
Of chance and destiny and—may not  
The next earthquake do the like to Thee?

But here at once I'm told this is  
Impiety, and wonder at the temerity  
Of Herford, who dares ask the reason  
'Why and wherefore of the Household Fly?'



## Microbes

No longer can we eat, or drink, or sleep, or think,  
Or even breathe or sneeze, quite at our ease,  
But what we find we're on the brink of some disease.

Open the papers and at once our eyes  
Are greeted by some new surprise,  
For there we see them advertise galore  
Cures for diseases we never knew before,  
Arising from smells and dust and dirt  
From millions of Microbes in one continuous flirt,  
Who thus enhance to such a huge degree the dangers  
We cannot avert, find out, or touch, or see,  
That in despair we resign ourselves to Destiny.



Note:—This was the original as written by E. V., not the version printed in "Moods."



## A Timely Saint

'Twas summer at midnight when all through the  
house

I went prowling for something to make a carouse.  
The drinkables all had been locked up with care  
For fear that some tramp might be wanting his share.  
When what to my wondering sight should appear  
But a waiter in white with a bottle of beer,  
Which he deftly uncorked with a motion so quick  
That I knew in a moment 'twas a summer St. Nick.  
With no stocking to fill and no Christmas near  
I yet felt it my duty to fill up with beer,  
Which I did without fail, but as people are slow  
To believe in this tale—I've the bottles to show.







Let the serious have their say,  
As we've lived we'll pass away,  
So bring the song and bring the wine—  
Fitting things for life's decline;  
Bring the wine and bring the bowl,  
Think not you will lose your soul,  
For many men as wise as they  
Have lived and died in this same way.  
A life unsuited to the present day?  
Let them cheer up—we soon will pass away.





A wandering breath of fragrant May,  
A soft caressing breath of spring,  
Awakens in my heart today  
The child that long since there did sing,  
And in its welcome springlike glow  
I feel it melts the lingering snow.



## Enchantment

Enchanted between Heaven and Hell  
In cold flames the Maid must dwell  
Until a Hero breaks the spell.





Three Old Men sat thinking  
All on a summer day,  
The first said naught,  
The second less,  
The third, he went away.

The first one was a Saint,  
The second was a Sage,  
The third was but the common Fool  
We meet in every age.

'I fear them all,' the Author said,  
'Their looks are very cool,  
I fear the Saint, I fear the Sage,  
But most of all the Fool.'

Yet he to them did show his book,  
'It treats of Doubt,' he said.  
The Saint at once began to frown,  
The Sage, he shook his head.

'Yes, 'tis of Doubt, as I have said,  
So fitting 'tis that I  
Should sometimes be in doubt myself.'  
'We thought so,' all did cry.

The Saint resumed his settled frown,  
The Sage his lofty look,  
The Fool first laughed and then he yawned  
And then his way betook.

The Writer tried to argue,  
Then also went away,  
And so it was while two Fools left,  
Two other Fools did stay.



## Vanity

A King who long had reigned  
Reviewing deeds too often stained  
By treachery and blood,  
By lust of power and lust of gold  
And by ambitions manifold  
All wandering from good,  
Said: 'Now alas! too late I see  
My life has been but Vanity.  
For all my gain has been my loss.  
My hoarded gold has turned to dross,  
Ambition to satiety,  
And my long search for happiness  
Ends but in pain and deep distress,  
Suspicion and anxiety,  
Until with Solomon I cry  
This world is naught but Vanity.'

## **“Highfalutin”**

**Cease fife and drum and trumpets’ rousing blast  
And cannons’ loud prolonged reverberations,  
Things needless now as in the buried past  
Since we have made our final reformatations,  
Renouncing War and all its infernal machinations!**

---

**Some Saints declare, in fact they swear,  
This war-craze must be curbed—  
‘Far better go to war ourselves  
Than have the Peace disturbed.’**



As to the whiffle-tree its whiffle  
So to the pen its play or piffle.

Things of the morning  
Repented of ere night,  
Thought better of next day,  
Here see the light.

Sweet are thy uses, O Variety!  
Within the limits of propriety,  
Thou art the spice of life,  
Or say the lively fife,  
To the humdrum of life's monotony.

Had things been but sweet and good  
And all mankind been meek and mild  
I fear me much we never should  
Have had a Whistler or a Wilde.



By a stroke of pen the Czar did away  
With drinking in Russia, and that in one day,  
But think you this dryness is destined to stay  
While Adam is made of such bibulous clay?

What a pity sayings new  
Quoted only by a few,  
Made common in the course of time,  
At last are quoted as a crime.  
The brightest sayings, such our pace,  
Become in one year commonplace.

When Painters take the Pen in hand  
And Poets wield the Brush,  
Many come forth the sight to see,  
But few die in the crush!

Logic affords us this surprise;  
'Tis full of loop-holes of escape,  
And the surveyings of the wise  
Are measured by elastic tape,  
So using wisdom Baconian  
Avoid all rigid forms Draconian.

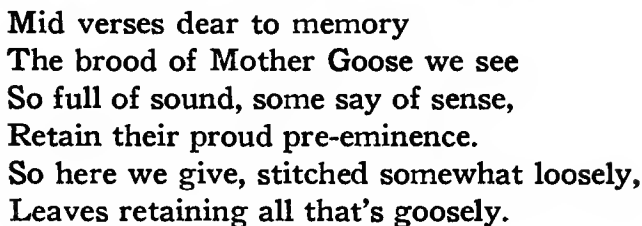
Doctors are but busybodies  
Interfering with our toddies,  
Examining our eyes and ears,  
Keeping tab upon our years,  
Overhauling our hydraulics  
And ending all our fun and frolics.

If in the making of my rhymes  
I use the same words many times  
And their recurrence bothers Thee,  
Think how they must have bothered me!  
Ideas plenty, rhymes but few,  
Try verse yourself—'twill bother you!

While walking in this vale of woe  
One finds full many a tender toe;  
But luckily all now aspire  
To roll through life on rubber tire;  
But tiresome and indeed a sin,  
To tread on toes—then rub it in!  
So autos guide as best you can,  
Avoiding toes of beast and man.

There is a point of hard detection  
Which stops just short of sheer perfection,  
Beyond which if we try to go  
'Tis painting lilies—bleaching snow;  
Running perfection in the ground;  
So stop when you this point have found.

The business man—  
He fights for honesty in trade  
As far as laws of trade permit,  
Yet finds to Conscience in the end  
A heavy debt he must remit.



**Said Canova to Pauline**  
**'You're not too fat nor yet too lean,**  
**You're not too young nor yet too old,'**  
**And here she added 'not too cold.'**

[239]

I have now reached that time of life  
When all friends seem to see  
That any kind of shaky health  
Is good enough for me,  
While if they're ill a single day  
There's the very Deuce to pay.

Oft in the street some man I meet  
To whom I nod a pleasant greeting,  
Then find that I'd made up my mind  
To cut him dead on our first meeting.

Hear Bacon beautifully tell  
How the most ancient music fell  
Into the flutes of Greece and Rome,  
There making for itself a home  
Where it remains—for not a tone  
Has reached the modern Gramophone.

This rhyming you may call it play,  
And so it is looked at that way,  
Yet also it may hold some Truth.  
Let Chronus with his iron tooth  
Put all to proof.



# GLEAMS



## Foreword to Gleams

*Gleams are not Criticisms, but more like the rays or lines seen in a spectroscope. X-rays we might call them, discovered in the effulgence which surrounds celebrated characters and seen from the standpoint of an ordinary person; a person possessed, so he thinks, of that questionable gift—a sense of humor. Had this ordinary person been gifted also with an ounce of Discretion, Silence—as far as he is concerned—would have reigned supreme and no one have been the wiser. Question:—are they now? No, these are not criticisms, for I feel that—*

The Cobbler may without disgrace  
Point out defects in the statue's sandal,  
Whereas the praise of form or face  
Would in his case be called a scandal.

## The Archæologists

Future research mid our remains  
Will show what care we take and pains  
To guard the output of our brains.  
To check and lawless thieves appall  
We blazon 'Copyright' on all—  
On Venuses and telephones,  
All copyrighted but our bones.

Note: "Our bones are turned to no such aureate earth  
As buried once, men want dug up again."





## Why Compare?

Let great poets stand single and apart:  
One to the mind, one to the heart  
His wisdom or his music doth impart,  
Nor merge the noble Milton with the throng,  
Nor Dante stern, the scourge of every wrong.  
How compare Shakespeare with the rest  
When he seems best, until we read the rest?  
No—let them stand apart, nor make compare  
Between the perfect, wonderful, or rare.

Contrarywise—

Who so noble are or rare  
But what with others we may make compare?  
This a comfort is to some, to some despair.  
Yet, to be just, however high or low  
Or dark or fair, or generous or mean,  
Some little touch is seen whereby is shown  
We each have something we may call our own.



## D. G. Rossetti

Rossetti simply seals our doom,  
Nor can we ever hope to join  
Of British Bards that noble throng  
Or even emulate their song.

A band of Plagiarists we stand  
In an extensive barren land,  
From a poetic point of view  
Seeing our Poets are so few.

In truth, Rossetti sees but one,  
Yet hopes that in the course of time  
We may give birth to things sublime  
Huge—rugged—raw—and ‘Underdone.’



Note: Last words in Rossetti's "Lives of Famous Poets": "The real American poet, Walt Whitman—a man enormously greater than Longfellow or any other of his poetic competitors." This makes us feel like quoting the Bab Ballads: "Time, time, my Christian friend."



There's something wrong, dear Whitman, with thy song:  
Words are not wanting, nor is sound  
Oft signifying nothing. But a bound  
To thy vast love, surpassing that of saints  
Embracing all mankind, cannot be found.

When Thou didst first appear, a shameful fear  
Ran through the land lest we should fail  
To understand thy occult meaning  
Of thy impropriety, which at once  
Gave Thee fame allied to notoriety.

In Thee we seem to hear that story told  
Of those who grasping all but little hold,  
In Thee we seem to see that fearful slip  
Between the longed for cup and thirsty lip;  
But when we're borne along 'on pinions strong'  
Unmindful of thy faults—we hail thy song.

Whitman reaped his "Leaves of Grass"  
And while the sun shone made his hay,  
We know not how 'twill look when sere,  
We only know it served his day;  
But say, why did he tear away,  
In ruthless rage it would appear,  
That leaf to modesty most dear?

[248]

## Emerson

'I am the Doubter and the Doubt.'  
Thus Emerson—turn this about,  
'I am the Kicker and the Kick.'  
Add bear's cubs into shape we lick.  
Blake says 'Damn strengthens.'  
That's the kick,  
And that 'Bless weakens.'  
That's the lick.  
So kick in kindness those you lick,  
And lick in meekness boots that kick.

Something is wrong in my quotations  
Or in my ratiocinations,  
My trend of thought seems off the track.  
It scarcely pays to put it back.



## Aristotle

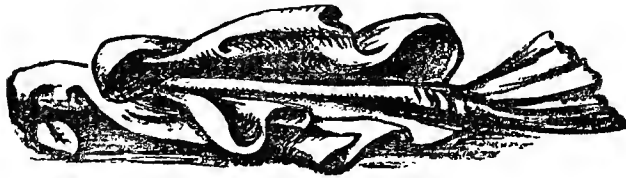
Once all-persuading Aristotle  
The tree of knowledge sought to bottle,  
Or put each branch into a socket,  
And if it would not fit—would dock it.  
For thought, reduced to handy lumps,  
The head provides convenient bumps,  
In this the origin we see  
Of world renowned Phrenology,  
Which in its day made such a show,  
And may again, for aught we know.





When snugly seated by the fire  
With Thee and friends and flowing bowl  
Who cares how loud the wild winds howl,  
    Let others chide,  
    With Thee I'll bide  
And risk a Tam O'Shanter's ride.

With Thee I breathe the new-mown hay  
And with Thee through the gloaming wander,  
In shady lanes where lovers stray,  
Where eyes replace the light of day,  
And kisses sweet forever linger,  
And arms bid stay, cost what it may,  
    With Thee I'll bide  
    And risk a ride,  
Another Tam O'Shanter's ride.



(April 2, 1916. Capri.)



When Plutarch before Pluto stood  
That monarch in a peevish mood  
Said: 'Was it essential we should meet  
To make thy set of Lives complete?  
Or did'st Thou think to intertwine,  
In thy old style, thy name with mine?'

Said Plutarch: 'Prithee ask no more,  
I had a pair of "Lives" in store  
When I gave out for want of breath  
But neither hinted at my death;  
And as for twining, would I dare  
To make of our two lives a pair?'

'Well, someone's done it and I'm vexed.'  
Here Pluto, turning, called out: 'Next.'



(May 2, 1916.)

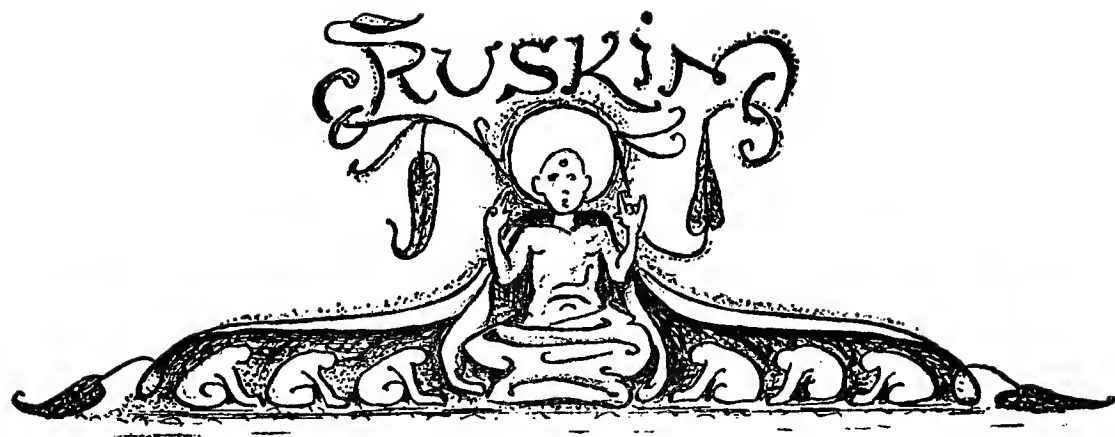




IN PLUTO'S REALM



'Tis told of Ericson the great  
That from his earliest years till late,  
He used a little set of tools  
Dating from his infancy;  
They defective and but few,  
Yet ample, for with them he drew  
His great designs and measured lines  
With absolute dexterity.  
Let his example be your rule—  
Idea first and then the tool,  
But show not like the fatuous fool  
Nothing but—Dexterity.



Lovely as are "The Stones of Venice"  
In Ruskin's hands they are a menace,  
It seems to him that he alone  
Can know the value of a stone;  
Yet I begin to think I know it  
As by him through Venice led  
I've had them all thrown at my head.



# Hudibras

Alas! Alas! how all things pass,  
Even Butler's 'Hudibras'  
Where jokes that once the rafters shook  
Would now hang dead, in mid-air stuck;  
Yet they were good in their own day  
But now have an odor of decay,  
A taste for which we can't acquire,  
But read, like Samuel Pepys Esquire,  
In order we may a verdict pass  
On Samuel Butler's 'Hudibras.'



## Lacon and Festus

It's long years since I looked at Lacon,  
Not classing it, or him, with Bacon;  
Yet Festus might repay perusal,  
Remembering how he did bamboozle  
Or with his tale of Hell afright us,  
For now we enter without asbestos  
The once famed Hell of once famed Festus.  
But why like Plutarch make a pair  
Of Festus and Lacon? Or compare  
Bacon with the great Shakespeare,  
Is more than I can make quite clear;  
I only know when this is done  
Someone may call it flippant fun,  
And think I should straightway repent,  
And so I will—to some extent—  
Under that good old plea 'well meant.'





Coleridge, we all know, thanks to thee,  
How Kubla built in Zanadu—  
Or did a pleasure dome decree  
Whose priceless treasures we would see,  
Had we the key.

But he who sees that dome arise  
And drinks the milk of Paradise,  
And hears that Abyssinian Maid  
And her wild strains so sweetly blending  
Must dread that noble river's ending  
And be afraid.

But not afraid of thy Marineer,  
Another tale we fain would hear  
Told by that bright-eyed Marineer:  
Or wander with pale Christobel  
Adown a moonlit haunted dell,  
Thrilled by that creeping pleasing fear  
We love so well.

Yes, therein lies thy matchless spell,  
Thou see'st more than tongue can tell  
In thy wizard's crucible;  
But soon in its magic fumes we fear  
All thy marvelous visions end  
And disappear.

In letters gloriously at ease,  
A spendthrift of thy great estate,  
In judging Thee, why hesitate  
To call Thee great?





How one bubble breeds another  
Like as twins are to each other,  
'Linked sweetness long drawn out'  
I merely quote, I do not flout;

For I was thinking of soap-bubbles,  
And our little joys and troubles,  
Each shining with its little sun,  
All bursting and the game is done.

And how it all resembles Life  
Where bubble-blowing is the strife,  
Their bright gleaming our reward  
While their bursting our sad record.

This peroration leads to Poe,  
From whom we differ, for we know  
This life is not an endless woe  
On a dark Plutonian shore.

When bubbles burst, we blow some more!  
Thus stopping that gloating Raven's quoting  
Himself monotonously o'er  
On memories' ever-echoing shore.

Poor Poe! How sad thou should'st not know it,  
Europe, at least, did hail thee Poet.  
Strange! How thy fire was quenched and lost on  
That Plymouth-rocky soil of Boston—  
That impenetrable 'Side' of Boston.

[260]



## The Bacon Theory

Of all the things that vex the mind,  
Of all the things that are not clear,  
I think I need but mention one—  
Who was Shakespeare?

The greater we make out the man,  
The greater grows the mystery:  
Why should he wish to live and die  
In absolute obscurity?

But make that man a King incog.  
Hidden worse than in a fog,  
The atmosphere begins to clear  
About Shakespeare.



## Pepys

Pepys' unconscious fun is fine,  
No need to read between his lines  
How that most lovable old sinner  
'Mighty merry at some dinner,'  
Tracing that dinner to its end  
In haste must for the doctor send,  
Who to relieve his passing ill  
Administers the timely pill.  
How touching his simplicity  
For when his pretty wife awakes  
She finds him weeping silently,  
Of course they make it up straightway.  
Then—'Mighty merry all next day'—  
And she—a new gown doth display.



## Dante

Stern master of vindictive verse,  
Skilled weaver of a dreadful curse,  
Thy powerful spell endureth long,  
For in thy unforgiving song  
Thine enemies yet dwell—in Hell.

Meanwhile thy name in Time's despite  
Revolves in spheres of heavenly light.  
Dost joy to cast thy glance below  
Where, merged in thy Hell's murky glow,  
Still wanders thine unforgiven foe?

Hateful thy creed, hateful thine age,  
Surely thy guide, thy Mantuan sage,  
Bore kindlier thoughts to Fields Elysian  
Than thou to thy dogmatic Heaven?

Once only dost thou touch our hearts.  
'Tis when Francesca's trembling lip  
Its piteous tale of love imparts.



## Spencer's Supine Comedy

In Spencer's paradise when all is done  
Clouds cast no gloomy shadow, there's no sun;  
For warmth's not needed where no one feels cold,  
Nor can age be where nobody grows old.

Where wrong is banished, there remains no right,  
So courage counts for nothing, there's no fight.  
There is no pity, where no one's bereft,  
So charity and poverty have left.

Even resignation, no display,  
For every atom is content to stay  
Where it is put, nor feels the least desire  
To tempt again motion's creative fire,  
But rests in balanced immobility  
As such things should in 'Supine Comedy.'



## Diogenes

What wast thou, O Diogenes?  
Till Macedonia's great Son  
Gave thee thy chance, the only one  
To so impertinently ask:  
'Wilt step aside and let me bask?'

Perhaps the surly Sage was right;  
He loved not intercepted light,  
So lying o'ershadowed in his cask  
What better favor could be ask  
Than 'Step aside and let me bask.'

For wonderful and up to date  
Was this Diogenes the Great;  
Plenty of sunlight and fresh air  
Were seemingly his only care,  
Surely no Englishman can snub  
A man who takes his daily tub?





By Allah! but my garden's Fair!  
 While with Thee and Love I share  
 My Book my Bread and Jug of Wine  
 Where the red-red Roses twine —  
 What Sultan's throne can equal mine?  
 By Allah! but my garden's Fine!  
 ~~~~~

By Allah! but my garden's Bare!  
 Sitting alone in the chilly air  
 Watched by the wolves of Want and Care  
 While ever nearer and more near  
 Croaks the Raven of Despair;  
 By Allah! but my garden's Bare!



Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>  
 1916

## Tupper

When passion like a raging flood  
Surges through our distempered blood  
Then we should practise self-control,  
Strengthen our will and save our soul.

This about as Tupperish  
As any Tupperite could wish,  
To such it may be safely told  
Silence has been compared to gold.

But not with Tupper, when he sang  
The golden guineas round him rang,  
Yet many bards who better sing  
Lack this satis-'factory' ring.



## Crichton

We must touch up the youthful Crichton  
By all allowed to be a bright 'un—  
Do not omit the 'Admirable'—  
Who it would seem was barely able  
With this addition to his name  
To get it on the roll of Fame.

Indeed his life reads like a fable,  
For have you ever seen or lit on  
A single word by this great Crichton?  
What's in a name? we well may say  
When of a man great in his day  
All but the name, has passed away!



## Horace Walpole

Walpole needeth not my pen,  
His own pen doth him best display,  
The man and manners of his day  
He clearly shows in this one ray;  
So to his hand I leave the job  
Of picturing the perfect Snob.

---

"Men of the proudest blood shall not blush to distinguish themselves in letters, as well as arms, when they learn what excellence Lord Herbert has attained."



## Chatterton

How could Fate blindly use its power  
To crush so fair and frail a flower?  
In thy short life no gleam appears  
Of comfort, only bitter tears;  
Others die young and young remain  
Their memory a saddened joy,  
But thine, poor boy, a lasting pain.  
Keats' name 'in water writ' doth stay,  
Thine, on a sigh was born away.





## Browning

'Tis dangerous to touch on Browning  
And set the Brownies all a-frowning,  
But he's a preacher like the rest,  
And only a poet at his best.

Hear Paracelsus where he tells us,  
Or rather Browning's about to tell,  
All we would know of Heaven and Hell,  
How he peters out and fails us  
Leaving the hard question dubious  
By giving the Medium's old excuse,  
Now worn bare through constant use—  
'Even Spirits are not permitted.'  
How much better had he admitted  
He did not know—and just said so.

But he's preacher like the rest,  
And only a poet at his best.





## Carlyle

Could Carlyle be alive today  
And have a bomb drop Chelsea way  
It would not altogether charm him,  
In fact I think it would alarm him,  
And might his worship much abate  
Of certain Heroes he calls great.

I think in reading history  
Distance aids philosophy,  
A bomb-shell dropped in our back-yard  
Creates not brotherly regard  
Towards those regarded formerly  
As almost of the family.

Is this the meaning of Christ's word?  
'In Heaven peace, on Earth the Sword?'



## Goethe or Psychic Conchology

There lies a priceless Pearl within  
Theology's calcareous shell,  
A word—by Science scarcely seen—  
Which humbler eyes oft spell.  
But call that shell Conchology  
Science might solve the mystery.

'Tis there as in a bag of tricks  
Exists the Theologic mix—  
Sin, Satan, Fate, Free-will and Grace,  
Where Man and Nature, face to face,  
Forever fight; but is this so?  
For when we to great Goethe go  
He cries, 'My friends, look on the whole.'  
Solves this the saving of the Soul?  
Or does the Devil still take toll?





A madman must that poet be  
Who vainly thinks to rival thee.  
Where find the colors and the hues  
That can o'er a dingy street diffuse  
The clear light of thy paradise?

Who by mere strength of will can see  
An angel singing in each tree?  
Or—making bold—stroke the lion's  
Mane of gold? or piping down a valley wild  
See on a cloud a little child  
Laughing at thee merrily?  
As thou didst—till theology's cold breath  
Condemned thy fairest flowers to death.

Blake did in noble poverty  
Achieve a signal victory,  
And his great scheme's consistency  
But proves his perfect sanity.

## Boswell and Johnson

Had Boswell added Goldsmith's name  
He would have made a trinity  
Of that great epiphytal tree  
He reared to Johnson's memory,  
Only let the sequence be—  
Genius, Learning, Industry.

Johnson, not so great as good,  
Did in melancholy mood  
Save his soul—but did it pay?  
(Dare we say so without scandal?)  
Was it worth Life's cheerful candle  
To save a soul in that sad way?

Goldsmith—vain and ill at ease—  
Offending where he aimed to please,  
Full of foibles—ever dear—  
All this we owe to Boswell's ear.  
Boswell himself was not Inventive  
But Mr. Boswell most Attentive.



## Defoe

Thy great book holds my boyhood's hero,  
In which I trace a dear old friend  
Through a sailor's bad beginning  
To a good man's peaceful end.

How breathlessly I fetch with thee  
That long run up the sloping beach,  
Until, beyond the last wave's reach,  
I turn and gaze on the raging sea.

Then, living in security,  
Yearning for man's company,  
Fearful, in wild amazement stand  
Before that footprint in the sand.

Book, dear like to youth and age,  
Showing on every living page  
The value and the rarity  
Of absolute simplicity.





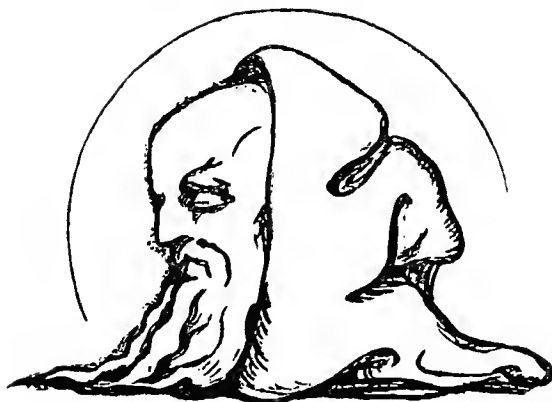
## Gustave Doré

Many good things that had their day  
If really good pass not away ;  
Of such the 'Thrill' is a good test,  
If it remains, perhaps the best ;  
For when the novelty is passed  
But little thrill remains at last.

So apropos of G. Doré  
Often we are forced to say  
How he amazed us in his day,  
When with Gargantuan appetite  
He illustrated all in sight,  
Books, ancient and modern, up to date,  
Till naught remained to illustrate.

And I confess I thought him great,  
With due allowance think so still,  
Nor can my loyalty abate  
While I remember the first thrill.





## Tolstoy

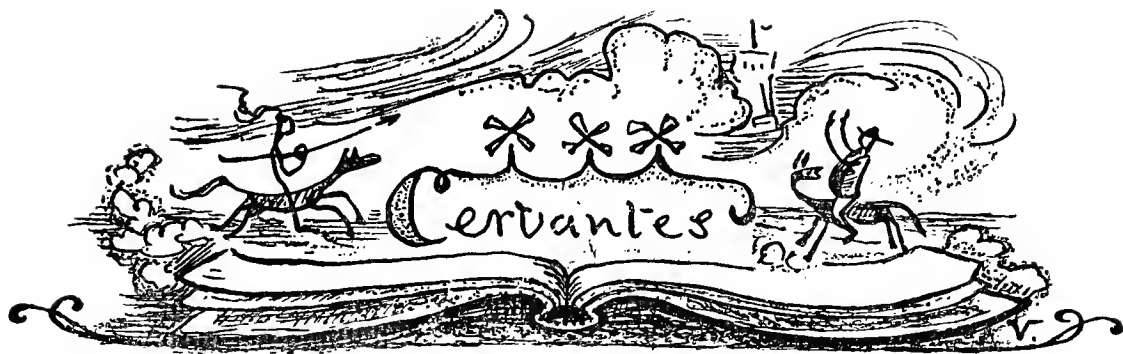
Saints have known from the beginning  
All about Man and Sin and Sinning,  
And have concluded for his good  
There's nothing left but the monk's rough hood.

In Man, from family ties set free,  
The perfect type of Man we see,  
The only being in their eyes  
Worthy the joy of Paradise.

So, better that all men should die  
Than give up Tolstoy's theory.  
And truly when I look around  
Most of the good are under ground.

Which makes me think I may agree—  
In time—with Tolstoy's theory.  
Strange that this quest—  
Man's greatest good—  
Should end beneath the monk's rough hood.

[278]



Reader, hast thou yet decided  
Which was the truthful Spaniard's plan?  
To depict a half-crazed Dreamer  
Or a simple Gentleman?  
Wandering, poor, (except for visions)  
O'er La Mancha's dusty plain,  
The Gentleman by boors derided,  
The Dreamer counted as insane.

Or was it the genial author's scheme  
To destroy, or to restore,  
The little Romance yet remaining  
Which in his heart he did adore?  
Was he himself a Hero dreaming  
A former Hero's dream once more?





Cornaro was an old Venetian  
Who lived about the time of Titian.  
(Pray note the neatness of this verse,  
A neatness we may well call dapper;  
To take away would make it worse  
Nor can you add to it a capper.)

Did Time with him prevaricate  
Or slip up in his calculation?  
Or was his but a glaring case  
Of well devised procrastination?

But sure it is through half-starvation  
He long outlived his generation,  
Till one small egg a day supplied,  
For him, a riotous collation.

This gave him quite a century  
Wherein he passed his latter days  
Composing madrigals or lays  
Or essays on longevity,  
Even whistling while at work,  
Such his senile levity!

[280]



## Beethoven

Music, freest of things in nature,  
Yet the slave of law,  
Mistress of mirth and melancholy,  
And of inspiring awe,  
Filling the dark chambers of the brain  
With heavenly light,  
Thy gifted children suffer most  
When giving most delight.



## Moore

A love-song in a foreign tongue  
I mind me how a maid did sing,  
And how on me a glance was flung  
That needed no interpreting.

My bark was waiting—we must part,  
Too soon, alas! I must away,  
But how that glance went to my heart  
And eloquently bade me stay.

It matters not how Lovers sing;  
There is a language of the Heart,  
That only loving eyes impart,  
That needeth no interpreting.



## Herford

Could I but rival Herford's vein  
In all things of a lighter strain  
I would not of my Muse complain;  
For Herford in his brilliant flights  
But pecks at every thing he sights,  
Just pecks—for Herford never bites.



## Austin Dobson

This gentle poet is all right,  
Dainty porcelain clean and bright,  
Shepherds and their shepherdesses,  
Flower-besprinkled brocade dresses,  
Smiling, pouting, billing, cooing,  
Always something graceful doing.

Withal he makes them live and breathe.  
They love and sigh and sometimes grieve,  
And many kisses give and take,  
But keep them in a cabinet  
Where they are so nicely set—  
And handle gently lest they break.





## Botticelli

How Botticelli's Graces fair  
Lightly leaning on the air,  
Regardless quite of gravitation,  
Excite our boundless admiration.

Alas! Fond hopes to us so dear  
As lightly lean on air, we fear,  
But lacking his imagination  
Follow the laws of gravitation.



## Carlo Dolce

C. D. was that Master  
Of whom we oft hear  
Who finished too highly  
A Magdalen's tear.

On his picture thought good  
Was passed this harsh sentence,  
'While admiring the brush-work  
We miss the Repentance.'



## Bangs

Cosy House-Boat, my delight,  
Would I could drop in every night.  
Perhaps some future century  
A refuge may provide for me  
Far from the present war-like mix;  
The quiet waters of the Styx  
May be the cure and give me rest.  
I'll ask Sir Walter—he knows best.



(June, 1920.)

## A Comment

As a small fire provokes much smoke,  
These things may have been all a joke,  
And prove that they are not the thing,  
But only a poetic fling.

The smoke (if joke) I much regret,  
The joy I've had I can't forget,  
And, strange as it may seem, I feel  
The fire, however small, was real.



## Books and Looks

Should good friends find  
Trends in my mind  
Resembling Thought  
Leading to naught,  
I can show books  
Whose solemn looks  
Wisdom proclaim  
That end the same.

Doth Folly's mask  
Hide Wisdom deep?  
Pray do not ask  
But simply keep  
All you may find  
And with thine bind,  
Nay—call it thine,  
I shall not mind.

























